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NOT TO BE ISSUED
SOME PASSAGES

IN THE LIFE

OF AN

ADVENTURER IN THE PUNJAB

Originally published in the Delhi Gazette.

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APPROPRIATED TO THE SUPPORT OF A SCHOOL IN THE DELHI TERRITORY.

14891

"When at the first I took my pen in hand,
"Thus for to write, I did not understand
"That I at all should make a little book.
* * * * *
"Neither did I but vacant seasons spend
"In this my scribble: nor did I intend
"But to divert myself in doing this,
"From worse thoughts, which make me do amiss,
"Thus I set pen to paper with delight,
"And quickly had my thoughts in black and white,
"For having now my method by the end,
"Still as I pulled, it came; and so I pen'd
"It down; until it came at last to be,
"For length and breadth, the bigness which you see."

BUNTER



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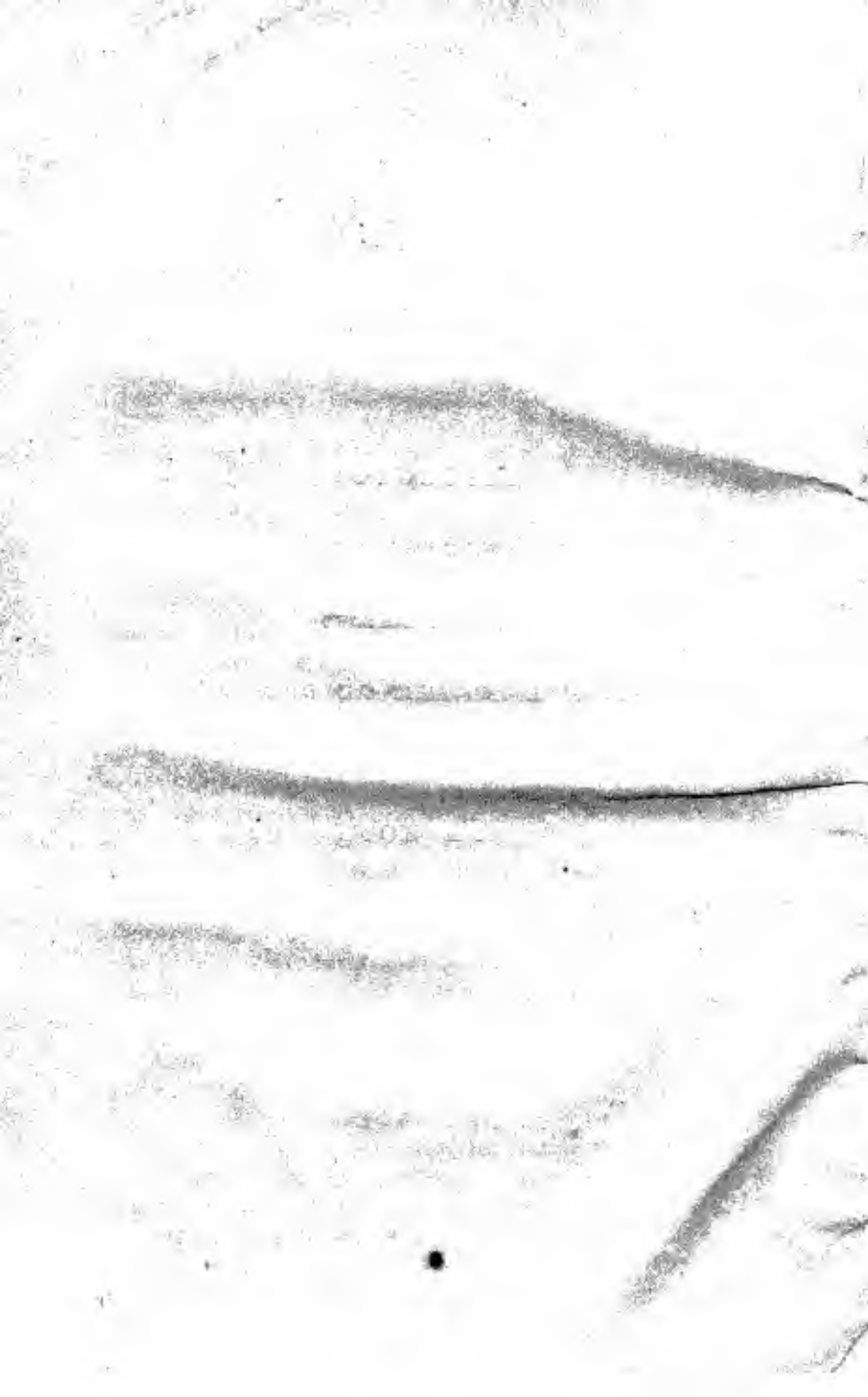
TO HER

WHO BEST DESERVES

ANY OFFERING THAT CAN BE MADE

BY

HER SON.





PREFACE.

When I scribbled off the first chapter of the following work, I had little idea of the length to which it would run; and still less, that I should now be writing a preface to a goodly-sized volume. Having been favored with some share of the public attention, I must now ask for a little more, while I tell enough of the birth and parentage of the present volume, to accredit the statements therein contained.

I have passed a great part of my life in India, and witnessed quite my share of the stirring scenes of the last twenty years; the history and statistics of this country had long been a favorite study and recreation; a labor of love, to which I returned with fresh interest when less congenial avocations had suspended the pursuit. In my vanity I fancied I knew something of the *statues* of our Indian empire, yet at that very time I was not aware that the "Army of the Indus," when it reached Ludiana in 1838, would make its very next march in the Lahore territory. I have since met with men, long resident in the North-Western Provinces, and not generally ill-informed, who did not know that the Sikh Government had any dominions south of the Sutlej, and as may be supposed, still more ignorant of affairs on the other side of that river.

The consideration of this ignorance was working in my mind, without either the thought of authorship or leisure for it, when, one evening, sitting at home, and reading a recent work on India which had become popular, though not very original or profound, the notion, "and I too am a painter," came into my mind, and taking up a sheet of paper, I scribbled off the first chapter of *Bellasis*. A friend who was by, read and approved; and with this encouragement two or three more chapters were soon written.

There is seldom a long step between writing and publishing ; " The Adventurer in the Panjáb " appeared in the *Delhi Gazette* ; the Editor asked for more, and more, and more—and thus was the Adventurer led on, step by step ; Bellasis himself and his personal adventures being purely fictitious, but the slight story serving as a vehicle to convey some illustrations of the border, its people, and rulers.

A few words, to distinguish fact from fiction in the following pages, may not be amiss. My personal knowledge of Láhaur hardly exceeds what is assigned to Bellasis, in the first chapter, but a brief view gives life and reality to ideas with which the mind has previously been familiar. Kángará I have not seen, but I took much pains to acquire the information requisite to give a faithful picture of that remarkable place. Ráj Kót is entirely imaginary ; I wished to describe Ryási, a stronghold belonging to Raja Dhyán Singh, but not being able to collect materials for a correct description, I invented a name, and imagined a place, such as might give an idea of the power of the Raja, and of the means at his disposal.

In the endeavours of Bellasis for the good of his subjects, I wished to sketch what I know to have been attempted, in another quarter, for a people as wild and impracticable as those of Kót Kángará ; the character of the hero himself was suggested by intercourse with some of the foreign officers in Ranjit's service, though he is not intended to represent any one of them. Chánd Khán is meant to personate an intelligent Native, with whom I have had a good deal of intercourse ; though I hope no such fate as that of the Multáni awaits my little friend, as I am not aware of his having done any thing to merit it.

The characters who bear real names, are intended as portraits ; many of the incidents they figure in are real, though not occurring exactly at the times and places here assigned to them. What is put into the mouth of the Mahárájah is almost all imaginary, but many of the conversations with Azízúdin really took place. For the romance of the story, the sole fact on which it rests is, that the Chief of Kángará had daughters, one of whom was sought by Raja Dhyán Singh, and that the father indignantly refused what he considered a degrading alliance.

The historical passages are chiefly taken from Forster, Malcolm, Prinsep, and Burnes, and I once for all acknowledge how largely I have used these authorities, too frequently, indeed, to admit of reference at every place. Some few facts rest on native authority, and with the above are interwoven notes, taken at different times, in the course of much opportunity for observation.

Little remains for the author to disclose, or the reader to know. The Adventurer makes no pretension to laboured disquisition or folio learning, professing only to give some popular outlines of an interesting tract, that has hitherto been little explored.





UNCLASSIFIED

CONTENTS.

"The reader is cautioned not to be too curious.—If the fruit be good, it matters little from what tree it has been gathered.—A Soldier of fortune described.—Life and death, or the old and new city.—Oriental self-introduction.—The road to a Monarch's favor.—Roses are not to be gathered without encountering thorns."

— "The old Sirdār

"Holds for his court a high darbār ;
 "Summons each vassal and each friend,
 "And bids his gallant sons attend.
 "The turbaned Sikhs, a wiry band,
 "Flock at their aged chief's command ;
 "With eagle eye, and bearing bold,
 "Polished armour, chains of gold ;
 "Unshorn locks that ample lie,
 "Slender spears, that quivering fly ;
 "Costly shawls and brodered vests,
 "Beards that float upon their breasts ;
 "Stately camels decked with shells,
 "Prancing steeds, and tinkling bells ;
 "All the sounds and sights that vie
 "In pomp of eastern chivalry."

From an unpublished Poem.

"When Pathān and Sikh engage
 "Deadly is the strife they wage—
 "Twixt the Moslem and the Sikh,
 "Hollow is the truce, and weak.
 "When bigotry goes hand in hand
 "With mutual wrong and shame ;
 "Treaties are but ropes of sand,
 "Straws, to bind the flame !"

Ditto.

Who was my father, or who my mother, signifies little ; enough, that after some stirring experiences in other quarters of the world, I found myself, on the 5th May, 1830, a Colonel in the service of Maharajah Ranjit Singh. My rise was sudden, and my military experience perhaps scarcely entitled me to command men old enough to be my father ; but, with the Maharajah, as with more civilized Monarchs, rank did not go by proved merit. It matters not a straw to my readers, who or what I am ; but I will let them into one secret, that I am not what I call myself. If, for personal or

family reasons, I adopt a "nom de guerre," what is that to the world? And, if all my facts are not found to be sober realities take my word for it they have a deeper foundation in truth than the narratives of most travellers. With this brief preface I beg the reader to know me as Colonel Bellasis, a gentleman travelling for recreation and excitement, but not above taking service should a favourable opening offer; one who, however adverse his fortunes may have been, feels that nature intended him for something, and who sees no reason, after George Thomas (a) made for himself a principality, and Perron, De Boigne and others, rode over princes, why a hook in the temple of Fame should not be accessible to him; or why, while ready to take his chance in the roughest sea, some rude but friendly blast should not lodge him in a haven. To win such fortune, I bore about one of the most powerful talismans, for I was reckless of chance, and no misgiving or calculation ever withheld me from seizing what seemed a favorable juncture. To aspire was my nature, and I was ready to perish rather than fall.

When my story commences, I was a tall, erect figure, standing six feet in my shoes; and if I wanted beard and moustache to win me favor with the Sikhs, still I had broad shoulders, a slender waist, and a dauntless air. I moreover, could use a sword and manage a horse, with any man: these were natural tastes, cultivated as qualifications for the course in which I delighted to pass my days.

Where I had been born and educated, I mean to keep to myself; I have not been a soldier of fortune without learning that least said is soonest mended; and among orientals secrecy and gravity are the prime elements of wisdom; nor is a dash of mystery without its interest all over the world.

On entering the Panjâb, I introduced myself as a "Wilâytî," a word of pretty wide signification, especially among a people who are not very nice geographers. Aware of the consequence of a first impression, I made my entrée at Lâhaur, mounted on an excellent horse, whose every nerve and fibre was of iron; defying all other controul, he was gentle as a lamb in my hands, obeying the slightest monition of voice or limb; Chândâ had been my companion in many an hour of labour and peril, and had stood my friend in many a time of need; after the rough simple habits we had been used to, my steed must have felt almost as much surpris-

ed as myself, at his own gay saddle-cloth, and the rich mantle that I had thrown round me, though it was one of the hottest months in the year. My suite was small, but complete, each of my attendants was mounted on a stout *yubû*; five horse-keepers ran by our side, and all bore the air of ease, good care and plenty. Our arms were plain, but all, especially my own, well finished and handy. Such was the impression caused by our appearance, that as we entered Lâhaur by the Taksâl gateway, we were greeted with many a "*shâbâsh*!" "*wah! Parangî!*" "*changâ ghoda!*" "*khub jewan!*"

My way (b), or rather the loss of my way, led me through the whole town; for though I had enquired what entrance conducted most directly to the suburb I was bound for, no one that I asked seemed to know. Indeed, throughout the Panjâb, there is this ignorance or apathy as to the route to be pursued—no one appears acquainted with the direct road, if that term be applicable to the pathways that intersect the country; and the loss of an hour in finding one's way in a single march, seems a matter of no account. The entrance of the Town from the north-west is picturesque and pleasing; even at the commencement of the hot season there was a green hue about the banks of the Râvi, contrasting strongly with the huge town in its immediate vicinity. Within the city there is little novel to those who have sojourned in the east; but with all its pomp and wealth, and it has both, there is a mushroom aspect about it, bespeaking rather the entrenched camp, than the city built for duration. In fact it is only the second halting place of the Sikh hordes who have over-run the Panjâb; Amritsar being their head-quarters. Long before their time, however, Lâhaur was a town of note. Thrice has it been desolated; Nâdir and Ahmad Shâh each in turn carried destruction through its ancient halls, its dwellings of centuries; and the merciless *Sikhs* completed the work, so that when Maharajah Ranjît Singh made it the seat of his Government, he had almost to found the city anew. Out of thirty-six of the old town divisions only six now remain: they are encircled by a strong and handsome wall, enclosing also some new ground, and forming a sweep of four *kos*—an armed enclosure not often rivalled. This wall is throughout the greater part of its extent, fronted by a *fausse braye* and a deep, though narrow ditch; there are twelve gates and as many wickets,

each of the former having a double entrance, so that if any adversary did force the outer gate, he must pass through a flanking fire before reaching the second. The parapets of the main work could be easily knocked over, but those of the *fausse braye*, having no command, could scarcely be battered, except from the crest of the glacis. This rough sketch of the works I by no means profess to be strictly accurate, though it is not intentionally otherwise. I give my impressions as received on that first morning of my entrance, when, in fact, I saw as much if not more of the town, than in all my future service.

Emerging from the narrow streets, (not quite so narrow, however, as those of Kábul or Hérât) I left the city by the *Mochi* gate; and what a change of scene! Before me lay a ruined mass of Mosques, Palaces, and Tombs, relics of a former age; their mutilated fragments looking even more grim, from the grotesque intermixture of Indo-European buildings and gardens, the residences of foreigners in Ranjit's service. But if I go on much longer describing, the reader will be as weary as I was. While I continued to thread my way under a burning sun, to a garden house, which, through the kindness of a native friend, had been placed at my service, I almost unconsciously uttered aloud the thoughts that the scene suggested, "a day or an hour sufficed to destroy all this, but even the genius of the wonderful man, who reigns in the Panjáb, has not been able in twenty years to restore the appearance of vitality, much less to put breath and strength into the ruined capital." My soliloquy was interrupted by a little, good natured, pert-looking Moslem, who civilly saluted me as he rode along side. "Ah, *Sahib*, you are an *Amir*, I perceive it by your thoughts; you cannot look unmoved on the scene before you. But you call our ruler a great man; is it greatness to destroy the shelter of the poor man, in order to build up lofty abodes for the rich? All that you have seen in the new town is the produce of plunder, of oppression, of doubly-dyed tyranny. The cost of the walls had been defrayed at the expense of one wealthy merchant of Amritsir, whose hoards have been taken, nominally to pay the workmen, but in fact to fill the purses of the supervisors." "What you say, my friend," replied I, "can hardly be true; but at any rate, who made you or me the Maharajah's judge? He is vicegerent here, and will have to answer hereafter to him who made him Monarch. —Sadi says, 'the smoke of the poor man's heart goes up to

heaven,' and so it is ; fifty years will level all distinctions, and then, as the same Poet says, ' what matters it to die on a silken pillow, or on the cold earth ? ' " " The *Sahib* is a poet and a philosopher," replied my friend ; " if my lord will permit his servant, he will be in attendance, and, perchance, may make himself useful."

I liked the man's alert, intelligent air, and as we now had reached the garden house I was in search of, I desired him, as I alighted, to attend at the third watch of the day.

Having seen to my good horse's fare, and the comfort of my faithful followers, I refreshed myself with bathing, and then breakfasted on a thick, dry *chapāti*, and a cup of Eau Sucrée, a beverage which in my travels had with me taken the place of every other. I then dispatched my principal attendant with a flowery epistle, accompanied with the offering of a handsome gold watch, to *saqir* Azizuddin (c) one of the favourites of the Maharajah. Scarcely had I done this, and stretched myself on the *chār-pāi* to rest, when my friend of the morning, who now made himself known as Chānd Khān was announced. He was mounted on a horse of good blood, which he managed with a half-jamty, half-military air. His whole appearance gave me the idea of what I can fancy Amir Khān's (d) *Sirdars* to have been, half-gentleman, half-rogue, mingling in his person both the accomplishments of the soldier and civilian. Chānd Khān wore a tightly-fitting but high turban of white muslin, *paijāmahs* of Multān silk, red with a white stripe—a vest of white flowered muslin, and a *dopatta* of the yellow Bahāwulpoor *Khes*, or twilled silk. He accosted me with " *salām alaikūm, ahwāl bukhair ast i* " and his air had all the affection of a friend and familiarity of an old acquaintance. I was not prepared for this, and looked rather puzzled. " The *Sahib* is surprised, the master of favour is not displeased at his servant ? " " No my friend ; but we of the west do not give our confidence on an hour's acquaintance." " My lord says truly ; every country has its customs ; and the men of Kābul, among whom I perceive by his accoutrements and speech my lord has dwelt, are ready with a word or a blow. Their hearts, like those of their mistresses, are easily excited to good or evil." " Your speech is strange, my friend," I replied, " who, or what are you ? " " In a word, my lord, I am an adventurer, free of the world ; I am

a *Pathān*, originally from Kābul, and for some generations my ancestors have served the Chiefs of Multān. My father died by the side of Muzaffar Khān, in defending his fortress against the one-eyed *Sikh*; when after a six month's defence, Multān fell to Ranjit Singh; and my country was no longer an abode for me." I followed the heir of my Prince into captivity. The allowance granted to Sarfarāz Khān scarcely furnishes food and raiment for his household; how then are his retainers to subsist? A few of the bolder spirits manage to hang on; ostensibly we eat his bread, we are protected by his name; and, one of us being *Baipari*, and another having taken the *Pahal*, we profess to eke our means by trade. Under this guise, I will not conceal from my lord, that we levy contributions on the spoilers of our land. The *ra'iyat*, the traveller, the merchant, or the true believer, we touch not; but what mercy should the dogs of *Sikhs* expect at our hands?" Here my informant laid his hand on his *tal-war* and excited by his feelings, raised his voice beyond the cautious and confidential tone in which he had been speaking: he paused, and I enquired, "And do you not thus put your own lives in peril? Does the Maharajah keep so bad a watch over his subjects?" "We have friends at court," replied Chānd Khān, "and we are cautious; when possible we perform our work secretly, and never shed blood except in self-defence, to put a witness out of the way: our dress is that of the accursed *Sikhs*, which is in itself a pass." "But," said I, "can you with the costume assume the air and features of so peculiar a race?" "Most people believe not, and in this mistake lies part of our safety; but can a person of the *Sahib's* discernment suppose that a people composed of the off-scouring of all other tribes, have not as much difference in their features as in their castes? Go to the *bazār*, take any dirty, naked *lūchā*, twist up his hair, give him a lofty turban and a clean vest; comb out and lengthen his beard, and gird his loins with a yellow *kamarband*; put a clumsy sword by his side, and a long spear in his cowardly hand; set him on a strong, bony, two-year-old horse, and you have a passable *Sikh*." "Truly you are plain enough spoken, my friend." "But not too much so, my lord; I see by your kindling eye, that you delight in a stirring life; and could we count you and your bold party of our band, you would soon learn the secrets of our trade; my lord looks astonished at my boldness, but I am safe in the hands of an honest soldier," (e) "You

are, my friend, but you will not long be so, if you thus trust every traveller: however, as you are communicative, tell me a little of how politics stand at court? Whose word and will are law? Whose friendship is desirable? Who best understands the Maharajah? For, in return for your confidence, I may tell you that I am a candidate for favour at court." Without hesitation Chánd Khán gave me a "catalogue raisonné" of all the employés; plentifully bespattering them all with dirt, and giving a triple portion to those followers of the prophet who served the infidel tyrants.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of *Khalifa* Nûrûdin, brother of the *faqir* Azizûdin; nothing daunted, my friend sat on while the preliminary speeches passed between the new visitor and myself, and then rose and took his leave.

The *Khalifa* (f) is a wily, oily-faced man; I met him with as many flowers of eloquence as he bestowed on me, and while he hoped that this new bud of friendship would ripen into golden fruit, I trusted that the flag of my prosperity would be unfurled in the sunshine of his Excellency's favour. We then came to matters of business, and I soon made it worth the *Khalifa's* while to understand the necessity of introducing me to the Mahârâjah.

The next day but one was fixed for my appearance at court; attired and attended as when I entered Lâhaur, I proceeded to the palace. Before arriving there, I met Rânjit himself, returning from his morning's ride, and much as I had heard of the insignificance of his first appearance, it startled me; the more so, perhaps, from the contrast it presented to the wiry and athletic forms that surrounded him. He rode gracefully, on a handsome active horse, and was followed by his principal *Sirdars*, each with his silken *chat-ha* carried by a running footman, and the whole cortège followed by an escort of five hundred well mounted horsemen and as many foot; they consisted of all tribes and castes, *Sikhs*, *Pathâns*, *Hindûs*, *Gurkhâs*, &c. all gaily attired in scarlet and yellow silk, the cavalry, sitting in high peaked saddles, and armed to the teeth with matchlock, pistol, blunderbuss, sword and spear; the others more lightly, but still efficiently armed: some few *Akâlîs* too were present, conspicuous by their high blue turbans, girdled with quoits; but more so, by their wild, maniac look, and insolent gestures. On seeing me approach, some of these hailed me with curses and abuse, but Azizûdin sent one of his orderlies to draw me off.

As the train approached the entrance to the Shālimār (g) gardens, the cavalry filed off, leaving the Maharajah, with his train, followed by the running footmen to pass through a lane, formed by a regiment of his newly-formed infantry, who received him with presented arms. I was kept at the gate for some minutes after the Maharajah had entered; and while thus detained, many of the soldiers broke their ranks and crowded round me; some gazed respectfully at my train and accoutrements, but more remarked with a sneer on my want of beard, and my half-european costume. Some of the horsemen also drew up, and were more especially insolent: one of them, Nand Singh, second in command of one of the newly raised cavalry corps, (a scoundrel with whom I soon became better acquainted,) was the most forward; he was a smart, active young man, with a bold and dissolute cast of countenance; he commenced caracoling his spirited little nag in circles closer and closer round me, half muttering, half chaunting a ribbald song. As he neared me, I warned him that my horse kicked; to this he deigned no answer, but after a little rode tilt by, grazing me, as if accidentally, with his steel clad shoulder. I touched the rein of my good steed, gave him half a turn, pressed him with my sword hand the veriest trifle on the loins, and with one tremendous kick he sent Nand Singh, horse and all, head over heels. A dozen swords were instantly drawn, and as many matchlocks presented at me, but my four stout followers closed around: and without affecting to believe my adversaries in earnest, I calmly expressed a hope that the fallen man was not hurt, regretting that he should not have taken my caution, and avoided my horse's heels. Whether owing to our firm aspect or to the royal vicinity, I know not; but the by-standers held off and treated us with vastly more civility during the few remaining minutes that I was kept waiting: and they looked with much curiosity when an orderly of the Prince's, came to tell me I was summoned to the *darbār*. When ushered in, I found the monarch seated in a golden chair, surrounded by about a dozen of his ministers; several reporters were in the distance, catching every word, and noting it in the "court circular" for transmission to every corner of the empire. As I entered, the Maharajah half arose, and greeted me with much courtesy; my *nazar* of a hundred-and-one rupees was removed, and I was told to be seated on the *farsh*, or carpet, near his Majesty; my own name and my father's, my place of birth, and my

age, were asked and told, and it was explained that though a *wilāyī* I was not an Englishman. I was then asked what I knew? what I could do? and what I wanted? all in a breath; and my reply was to the effect, that I could do any thing, was ignorant of nothing, and having heard the fame of the King, was come from a far country to offer my services. "You speak Persian?" "Yes, I have been some time in Persia?" "Can you build a fort? Can you cure a long-standing disease? Can you cast a gun? Can you shoe a horse? Can you mend my watch, which has stopped?" "All, through your Highness's *iqbal*, is in the reach of mortal; and what other men have done, what should prevent Bellasis from doing?" "Shāhbāsh, *faqīr*, he is a bold *jawān* this friend of yours!" "He is, your Highness, but try him, and you will find his merits exceed his words; the King of Rām, the *Shah* of Persia, the *Amīrs* of Scinde, all asked him to join them as a brother; but he would devote his sword to none, but the Lion of the Panjāb." During this flourish in my behalf, two nearly naked wretches were dragged in, caught in the act of pilfering at the garden gate; they did not deny the charge, and the nose of one, and ears of the other were sentenced to be cut off. In as short a time as I can write it, the sentence was executed, and the culprits, bleeding as they were, were driven out. "Sharp work, Bellasis," observed the King, as I looked after the mutilated thieves: "We do not take life, but we punish." My heart sickened, and I ventured to remark that perhaps they were led on by hunger. A dozen voices stirred to hush me and the *faqīr* gave me an admonitory look. "Let him alone," said Ranjit, "I like plain speaking and he is but a *nya jawān*. You ride well, I hear, friend?" "I have strode a horse from my youth, your Highness." "Well, you *Farangis* leap your horses. There is a fellow just entering who will shew you the way over that fence." I looked at the man pointed out, and recognized Nand Singh, who, as an acknowledged favorite, had been allowed to force his way in, probably to ascertain whether mention had been made of the fracas at the door. I saluted him gravely but politely, he returned the salaam with a half-surly, half-defying air; and we were all forthwith, *Vazirs*, Scribes, *Omedwārs*, Plaintiffs, Defendants and prisoners, bundled out to the garden.

The Sikhs are indubitably bad horsemen; however common

report may say to the contrary : their horses are so hard worked, so scantily fed, and so badly bred, that they have no spirit for the rider to quell ; however Nand Singh was by profession a *chābuk sowār*, and at Ludianā had followed the hounds in the train of some European he had there served. Delighted at the opportunity of shewing off against me, he urged his horse to the fence pointed out by the Maharajah ; but the animal being tightly curbed and bitted, failed to clear the fence, insignificant as it was, and fell heavily with his rider ; I took the signal, gently touched Chānda with my heel, and springing over the barricade, wheeled round, and on my return, cleared both it and the body of my prostrate foe. In another instant I was at the feet of the Maharajah : “ *Shāhbāsh*, Bellasis, you shall teach my Lancers. You are a Colonel now in my service, and shall have a *khilat* on the spot. If you are but as bold in the field as in the garden, we shall soon be good friends. But tell me, what was this squabble at the gate ? ” I related the transaction simply as it happened, and Ranjit replied ; “ you look as if you spoke the truth, Bellasis ; Nand Singh has been made too much of ; and is ever daring in the wrong : besides, he shewed to day that he cannot ride. But you must be careful, my palace grounds are not the scene for a tumult, nor are my guards fit subjects for experiments as to the power of your horse’s heels. A day shall be fixed for you again to attend, and you will then receive a *parwanāh* of instalment in your new office, and instructions for your conduct. Your fortune is in the ascendant ; be prudent, and do not rashly mar it.”

The Maharajah expressed this counsel as much by signs and gestures as by words ; I signified my respectful ascent, and we all returned to the hall of audience. A *khilat* was then presented to me, consisting of eleven pieces, which included a horse and accoutrements, a sword, a pair of shawls, a pearl necklace, a shawl *chogha*, and two pieces of fine muslin ; the value of the whole amounting to eleven hundred rupees. These, with a bag containing a thousand rupees, were delivered to my attendants, and I was dismissed.

The words of the Maharajah were blunt, but his manner was mild and conciliating ; and even had I received less flattering marks of his favour I could have been at no loss to read the impression my reception had made on the courtiers, plainly written as

it was in the eyes of all. Many who on my entrance had muttered, "here's another *Faringi*," "have we not enough of them already?" "Do not Allard, Ventura, Avitable, Court, monopolize enough of the royal favour?" and such like observations, now were silent, or with bland gestures and fawning caresses pressed forward to offer their services and congratulations. I said little in reply, but civilly making my way among them, took the road to my own dwelling.

NOTES.

(a) Whoever feels interested in stirring action, and in tracing what may be done by a rude, uneducated, and even dissipated man, ought to read Franklin's life of George Thomas; which, awkwardly as it is written, had strong attractions for me in my boyish days. Peron, De Boigne, and some other French adventurers, were superior men, and only wanted a favourable combination of circumstances, such as we found, to have anticipated Britons in a *Desid* empire.

(b) Cavalry guides are proverbially bad in India; but let no one who loves his peace, and prefers his own bed to a village *chauri*, trust himself to the tender mercies of a Sikh *sowar*: for where it is possible to go wrong, he will be sure not to go right.

(c) *Faqir* literally means beggar, and generally a religious mendicant. In this instance, however, it is used as a title of respect and is with *Pir* (a saint) and other such titles often arrogated by men whose holiness or poverty lies only in the name.

(d) For the benefit of English readers, I may say, that Amir Khān was a *Pathān* adventurer, who, during the first twenty years of the present century, took a conspicuous part in the wars of Upper and Central India. Born of poor, but respectable parents in the north of Ronikund, he commenced his career as a private horseman in 1788. After serving first one chief, then another, he adhered pretty steadily to the family of Juewant Rao Hoikar until 1818, just before the battle of Mohidpoor, when he was gained over by the British, under guarantee of holding, unmolested, his possessions, the value of which was about two hundred thousand pounds per annum. After this arrangement he retired from public life, and was virtually a Prince in his own territory.

(e) Chānd Khān's openness may appear absurd and incredible; but no one who has not tried, could believe the confidence with which Europeans, (especially where they are rare,) are treated by natives, who receive any encouragement: their honor is implicitly trusted, not to betray, even where they do not approve. The original of Chānd Khān has told the author facts almost as dangerous to himself, though not of exactly the same nature as those noted in the text.

(f) This title means a king, a cook, a tailor or a pedagogue. Not being a successor of the Prophet, Nūrūdin (whose name means light of the faith) had no right to the first interpretation, and would probably have felt affronted at any one of the others. An interesting mystery must therefore rest over the *Kha'pha-jī*. This individual may seem a strange medium for *Bolasis* to

choose, for his introduction at court, but the following letter from M. M. Allard and Ventura shows that such things have been. The tone adopted by my hero, is not precisely that of the Frenchman and Italian, but every man takes his own high-way or bye-way to gain his object.

(Translated from *Prinsep's Life of Ranjit Singh*, page 132.)

TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

Sire,—The favours showered on us by your Majesty since our arrival in this capital, are innumerable, and correspond to the high opinion we had formed of his (your) benevolence. Fame, which had borne the name of the King of Lāhaur, as far even as our abode, said nothing in comparison of what we have seen. Every thing around your Majesty is great, and worthy of a sovereign who aspires to immortality. Sire, when we first had the honor of being presented to your Majesty, we disclosed to him (you) the motive of our journey: the reply he (you) vouchsafed sets us at ease, but leaves us uncertain as to the future. We, therefore, had the honor of addressing your Majesty a few days ago to know whether our arrival in this state is agreeable to him (you) and whether we can render him (you) any service by our knowledge in the art of war, acquired as superior officers, under the immediate command of the Great Napoleon Buonaparte, Sovereign of France. Your Majesty has not yet relieved us from this suspense, and we are still without his (your) commands. We have, therefore, reiterated our request in the french language, according to the advice of Nuradun Sahib, who leads us to believe that an individual employed about your august person understands our tongue. In this uncertainty we beseech your Majesty to condescend to forward us his (your) instructions which we shall follow with the utmost punctuality.

We have the honor to be, with the deepest respect,

Sire, your Majesty's most humble, most obedient,

and most devoted servants,

Lahor, 1st April, 1822.

C. VENTURA, C. ALLARD.

This address can only find a parallel in that of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. The confusion of persons and tenses in the letter is as in the original French; the reason of its having been written in that language is explained in Prinsep's narrative.

(9) The name applied to the royal pleasure grounds in most oriental capitals. These gardens are stiffly laid out, with straight walks, edged by cypress trees, artificial ponds and fountains here and there, and formal-looking plats of flowers and shrubs at intervals.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

CONTENTS.

*"A favourite has no friends.—The road to royal favour is sometimes nery.—
 "Be master of yourself, and you will be no body's slave.—Be thary of your presence,
 "if you would have it prized.—The honey of a King's favor resting on you may
 "be known by the buzzing of flies around."*

For why? because the good old rule
 Sufficeth them—the simple plan
 That those should take, who have the power,
 And those should keep—who can.

Hardworth.

Salt seasons dainties, and my food is still
 The humblest root, my drink the simplest rill.

Corsair.

The sun was high in the heavens when I reached my dwelling ; and such a sun ! he only can understand its power who has been exposed to it in the hot winds ! the burning rays showering down on a man's head, penetrating every defence, reflected in a thousand directions from the parched, arid ground, while the scorching wind catches the breath, the eyes are blinded with the glare and dust, and the brain feels absolutely boiling. At this season, when frequently for days together the sky is one sheet of torrid dust, what mockery does there seem in European descriptions of "fresh morning," "gorgeous noon," "dewy eve!"

Getting under a roof, I felt as if an iron cap had been removed from my head ; I bathed, dressed myself in loose white muslin, and reclined on a *chârpâi* to take my frugal meal and think over the events of the morning ; I saw that if I had made one friend, I had roused many enemies, how was I, a foreign stranger, to secure the one, and disarm the others ?

While thus meditating, in glided the *saqir* Nûrûdin who, being seated, congratulated me on the events of the morning ; "*afrin, afrin sahib*—your star is in the ascendant. Never before had *wilâyati* such a reception ! Your fortune is secure !" "And to what," said I, "will that fortune lead ?" "To what? asks the *sahib* ? Favour and fortune are here synonymous, you will have

the command of an army, the government of a province, or the ——" "Ah, but" I interrupted him, and then checking myself added, "Good *Khalifa-jī*, whatever I obtain will be through your favour, and you will not find me ungrateful." The *faqīr* touched his head, and drawing nearer to me, said, in a confidential tone: "it is to shew my own and Azīzūddīn's desire to serve you that I now come to warn you of plots already laid to cut short your career. Your best policy is to make friends of the brother Rajahs, Dhyān and Gulāb Singh; and to avoid either quarrels or intimacy with the Europeans in the Maharajah's service. You are young, and appear spirited, but, to prosper you must restrain your passions. I do not speak of any individual as your enemy, but warn you that there are many to whom you will be as a thorn in the eye. Remember, our practice is different from that of you *wilāyatīs*, no man with us goes about unarmed and unattended; and the higher he is in favour the more he requires precautions." I thanked the *faqīr* for his advice; and not giving me time to question him further, he rose and took his leave, ordering in a bag of one hundred rupees and certain trays of fruits and sweetmeats sent as a *ziyāfat* by the Maharajah.

While my people were abroad picking up news, I had time for much cogitation, and chalked out in my own mind the line of conduct I should pursue. And I will take this place to introduce, not only the result of the day's deliberations, but the opinion I formed of Ranjīt and his court during my stay at Lāhaur, which will save after repetitions, and be a clue to my story.

Ranjīt Singh was at this time about fifty years of age, his constitution much worn out by hard living and debauchery; of mean appearance, one eyed, and small of stature. Wholly illiterate, but gifted with great natural intelligence, and a wonderfully quick apprehension and retentive memory; he managed better than those more learned to transact the current business of his kingdom; all the revenue accounts pass under his own eye during their audit, his whole attention is directed to trying how much he can clip and pare; a true statement he does not reckon on as among possibilities, so that when the accounts seem all fair and square, and the revenue rendered even exceed the stipulated sum, he always disallows a certain per centage, the tenacity of his memory enabling him to follow out the most complicated statements For

his age and country, he may truly be called a great, and in some respects, even a good king; he is active, enterprising, and, to a certain extent, just. Kind and liberal to those within his sight, he is much beloved by his personal followers, though the English proverb, "out of sight, out of mind," is in his case as applicable as the oriental one, "a dog in the presence is better than a brother afar." From the same easiness of disposition, he rarely refuses a request; though his promise is by no means a sure *sansad*. I have heard him accused of grasping rapacity, and I admit, justly; but we must judge him by his education and temptations, and by this standard his appetite for riches was not greater than was to be expected. He has been called faithless, and on some occasions deserved the charge; but shew me the prince, ancient or modern, who, tempted as he was to breach of faith, kept the terms of treaty as he did with the British? It may be said truly that the worst parts of his rule are those common to oriental despots, while the favorable points arise from his individual character.

Personally, Ranjit Singh is brave, and has slain many an enemy in the field; but I am not aware of his having ever, in cold blood, ordered an execution, either in the way of punishment or revenge: and while those of the royal blood are all but begging their bread at Delhi and Kábul (*a*), he almost invariably provides for the families of his conquered enemies. The annual progresses that the Maharajah makes through the country, give him the opportunity of seeing almost every village, and his extraordinary memory keeps a register of what he has seen, so that when asked for grants of land, he gives with his eye more open than those of granters usually are. He detests complaints, and usually stipulates with his farmers that none are to reach his ear; yet as he frequently travels, and is seen daily, some poor wretch or other frequently attracts his notice and makes a complaint. Ranjit's eye is therefore now and then opened to what is going on; one of his favorite modes of sounding those about him is to set them to dispute in his presence, when a tone or innuendo, that would be lost on a duller ear, catches his.

In reviewing the Maharajah's character, we must be persuaded that, with his meagre, stunted, ungainly form, deficient in those personalities that win the respect of barbarians, he must possess vast ability, address, and moral courage; for he not only drew all

around into his wishes, but he knew when to yield, and how to contract, his measures. Having raised himself from a petty Chief to a conqueror, he had Holkar (*b*) for his refugee, and all Hindustân in a blaze around him : yet he, then a young and stirring leader, had judgment enough not to join himself to the Mahrathâ who, though now in adversity, had a lately been the scourge of the country, and driven before him many of the disciplined British troops. And his whole conduct shewed that he had from the outset penetration enough to estimate justly his own power and that of the English.

I must say a few words as to those whom I found the immediate personal favorites of the Maharajah, and with whom I had afterwards most to do.

The men in highest confidence were Rajah Dhyân Singh and Jemadâr Khushiyâl Singh with the *faqir* Azizûdin. The rise of the two first was not by the most respectable road. I believe there is little doubt that as ministers, and even victims of Ranjît Singh's debaucheries, they both first obtained favor. Gulâb Singh and Sachet Singh, brothers to Dhyân Singh, are likewise wealthy and powerful ; the territory and treasure of these brothers are not much inferior to those of His Highness himself. Although the family is of good blood, it was in obscurity, and Gulâb Singh was only a common *sawâr* : in a feud he killed a man, and being close pressed by the friends of his victim, he took refuge in the Maharajah's tent, then pitched in the plain, as was his custom when reviewing his troops. Ranjît was pleased with the refugee's appearance, pardoned, and took him into favor : he soon introduced his brother, who, in turn, brought in Sachet Singh. Each in turn endured the Maharajah's familiarities, and being men of business and courage, made their way into his permanent favor. All three became *Rajâs*, acquired *jadgirs* and contracts that have enriched them beyond count, and the command of troops and territory that, with their own ability, make them dangerous subjects.

It was always a matter of astonishment to the well-wishers of Ranjît Singh, that wise and wary as he is, he allowed this fraternity such formidable power. Dhyân Singh knew the public feeling, and was ever on the spot to prevent its reaching his master's ear ; or in his brief absences, had trusty followers to

watch every avenue. But somehow, a little bird got access, and asked the Maharajah why he permitted such doings? "Why" said the King, "it is my fate—I threw myself on them—it is my destiny." And so it is—Dhyān Singh has the door-way; he has monopolized the office of Prime Minister, Commander of the forces, and chief aide-de-camp to His Highness: he has shut out almost all access; and though, as I before said, a supplicant does usually make his way into the presence, and raising the cry of "*dohdi*," obtains a hearing; yet he is so soon hustled out, that, however gracious may have been his reception from the sovereign, he has seldom courage or ability to try a second hearing. Sachet Singh and Gulāb Singh are seldom at court, but are in the provinces, commanding large bodies of troops, and administering the territory they hold in farm: the latter holding the salt contracts, interferes directly with the bread of every man in the country.

Dhyān Singh, though slightly lame, is a fine looking man, of a noble presence, polite and affable, of winning manners and modest speech. He sits on the ground, and rather behind the Maharajah, while others, his inferiors in every way, are seated on chairs. The *Raja* decidedly is, next to his master, the ablest man in the Panjāb; though, like him, so illiterate as scarcely to be able to sign his name.

Khushiāl Singh, (*d*) a native of Suhārunpoor, in the British territory, is now a coarse, vulgar-looking man, though when he was one of the hundred picked soldiers appointed to the night guard of the Maharajah, he was a fine handsome young fellow. This was before the elevation of Dhyān Singh. For many years Khushiāl Singh held the command of the door-way, which is equivalent to that of the guards, as well as to the royal ear: but he was less cautious than his successor, and on one occasion, having proposed to the Maharajah to go from Lāhaur to Amritair, His Highness suspected a plot for his own imprisonment. Upon this he determined to deprive Khushiāl Singh of his command; fearful of offending a powerful faction by open supersession, the king got Dhyān Singh and his brothers, with their followers, up into the *Samān Bārij*, (or citadel and palace) one night, by scaling the walls: and then quietly displaced the men of Khushiāl Singh, who was wise enough to make no opposition, and who has since been wise enough to shew no resentment: in other respects he

holds his former place in the *darbār*, and is consulted on all important occasions.

Writing these memoirs from memory, I am aware that I occasionally mix up dates; but this does not affect my story, which is rather founded on fact, than a strict relation of chronological events:—a historical romance of the school of Scott's Napoleon, or Robertson's America. I will, therefore, now mention an event, though it occurred after the date of this portion of my history.

Khushiyāl Singh was sent to assist Kunwar Sher Singh, the Maharajah's son, in the Government of Kāshmir, and to recover its ruined finances: the prince, seeing his bent, gave up to him, entirely, and escaped responsibility: Khushiyāl recovered some rents, screwed a few lacs, and turned a season of dearth into one of most frightful famine, nearly depopulating the province, and sending the wretched inhabitants to the very centre of Hindustān, in search of bread. From the revenue, it formerly yielded, of forty lacs, Kāshmir fell to eight; and only with nursing and care has it reached sixteen. The Maharajah was of course much displeased, and for a time Khushiyāl Singh lost favor; but, at the time I am now writing, he is one of the most honored counsellors: though a first class *Sardār*, he is still called *Jamādār*, the title he held when he was door-keeper to the presence.

Azizādīn (e) was by birth and business a barber; a smart, bold young fellow, he obtained command of a regiment and a small territory. Falling into the clutches of Dīnā Nāth (f) and the accountants, he was so squeezed that he saw the futility of kicking against the pricks, or attempting to be independent: he, therefore, assumed the *faqīr*, and in that character attracted the notice of the Maharajah, and became a second Dhyān Singh.

He is his master's mouthpiece, and most ably he fills the office; he interprets a word, or even a sign, and throws Ranjīt's meaning at once into beautiful language; embellishing sound sense with rich and appropriate imagery; in his own phraseology, "he is a parrot of sweet sound." The *faqīr* is now merging into the yellow leaf, and affects a dirty, slovenly, unpoverished appearance, but he is rich, and particularly influential from having got the Maharajah's ear: this has procured for him a patch of land in almost every *jāgīr* in the kingdom, for without him or Dhyān Singh for intercessor, no one would be safe. The good word of even a com-

mon orderly at *darbar* may be of use ; and therefore all, having ingress are more or less valuable as friends, or formidable as foes ; all *mofussil* employes accordingly pay, according to their means, to the *darbār* attendants, keeping one or more of them in regular pay. Among the counsellors, probably Rām Singh, Gobind Rām and Beni Rām (g) are the most respectable, but their influence is far inferior to that of the favorites already mentioned.

The European officers are kept more as *drills*, or as agents in the execution of difficult and dangerous enterprises, than as advisers. Allard and Ventura. (h) have been allowed almost unlimited authority, in organizing the new levies ; promotions and appointments have rested chiefly with them, and any opposition to their orders has been summarily punished. As may be supposed, the new system was very much disliked by the *Sardārs* ; but Ranjit was determined to carry out his plans ; and no greater crime could be alleged against gentle or simple than that of being a *dangā-wālla*, or *takrāri*. The result of the system has been a very efficient body of troops, Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery ; but already is patronage beginning to sap its foundations ; the building completed, the Maharajah does not think the same care necessary for its preservation as for its construction, and boys, simpletons, and dotards are here, as in older services, creeping into command. The key stone, too, of an army is wanting—there is no undisputed, punctual pay. The regulars are certainly better looked to than the other troops ; but, while the coffers of the state are overflowing with the plunder of Multān and other provinces, the army is seldom less than a twelvemonth in arrears. Once, indeed, I saw the Maharajah obliged to take refuge in Gobind Garh (i) from the violence of his Gurkha Battalion roused to desperation by being kept out of their pay. Rarely is any body of troops paid except on representation from their commandant at the *darbār*, that they are starving or mutinying : the answer then, if favorable, is a *tankwāh*, or order on some one or more of the royal domains. This may be ruin or great profit according to the power and means of him to whom the order is given, and him on whom it is made ; for, as already hinted,, the Maharajah when acquiescing, by no means intends positively to comply, but only to quash importunity ; and over haste in executing an ungracious decree, thereby causing after reference to the *darbār*, is by no means approved. Indeed,

as will soon appear, Ranjit himself desired me not to be precipitate in fulfilling any important order; and I have myself seen five orders come within a twelvemonth, all couched in the most positive terms, and at direct contradiction with each other. The case was this, a small *jāgir* was granted by a dependant chief to one of his followers, they quarrelled and the principal wished to dispossess him; both appealed to the paramount; when pressing orders for instant delivery to one were followed by a messenger to put the other in possession; and he again had scarcely started when an order was sent to the *Sardars* in the neighbourhood to concentrate their troops, and put the first grantee in possession. So it went on for nearly a year, when at length a detachment of the royal troops, by stratagem, but with the full concurrence of the *Darbār*, got possession of the small *garhi* that commanded the estate, which they seized from both contending parties, who discussed joining against their common master, and were only prevented from doing so by being taken by surprise. This incident may give a fair idea of the mode in which military and political affairs were carried on.

Of the revenue and judicial department, I must say a few words. Two-fifths is the proportion nominally taken by the *Sarkār*. At this rate an estimate of the average proceeds of a certain term of years the whole country is farmed out, in larger or smaller portions. The estimate may be above or below the mark, the *raiyats* juicy or contumacious; it is all the *quismat* of the farmer, he must realize the amount, and look out for his own profits too, without collecting more than two-fifths of the produce; if he exceed this proportion, or if his profits are high, it is sure to reach the Sovereign's ear, and he then disallows proportionately on the accounts returned, leaving just so much as he thinks will stimulate the farmer's industry, and keep him from disgust.

Should the farmer, however, fail in realizing the sum specified by government, he is imprisoned with more or less severity, degraded, cast off, or forgiven, and given another chance in another quarter, with the balance written against his name, according to his interest at court, the opinion of his ability, or the cause of the defalcation.

The revenue-farmer is judge, magistrate, and often custom-master too within his jurisdiction.

The *Adalat* is another rich source of revenue to the state, fine being the punishment awarded in almost every case, and being always the ready means of avoiding all other retribution. In civil cases, the gainer is mulcted one-fourth of the property at issue, and so common is it for both parties to pay for a decision, that he only is considered a bad man and an unjust judge, who takes your money without furthering your cause. Under such a system the poor man has little chance; and though the vagabond thief, pressed perhaps by hunger, has his nose and ears cut off, and is thereby irrecoverably branded one of the profession, the wealthy robber and dexterous ruffian ride unmolested through the land.

From the customs alone, twenty-four lacs of rupees enter the royal treasury; Amritsar yields nine lacs. We may judge what remains to the trader, who not only has to pay this recognised levy, but to pass through the screw-press of all the subordinate officers; rules and rates are laughed at, every ferry and every pass is guarded, and the *baipāri* pays according to the humour of the watchman, which in turn is regulated by a close calculation whether the amount taken will kill the nest-egg, and prevent the trader returning, or bring down on himself observation, and consequent squeezing.

The picture I have sketched of my new-fellow subjects and our ruler, is not a very pleasant one; but it has its reliefs, and we must consider the elements Ranjit had to work upon, and the time he had to consolidate his power. He found the country swarming with petty chiefs, each a legalised plunderer and murderer; the people were all ignorant, idle, listless, and brutally sensual. Persia, Afghanistan, and the adjacent parts of Hindustan were in much the same condition; Ranjit has made life comparatively secure, and he must have done something for property, or we should not see the existing wealth of Lâhaur and Amritsar, nor would his subjects shew so little anxiety to locate themselves under the neighbouring British rule.

My reader must forgive me, if I have given him too long a dose of history and politics, but I could not without this preface make the rest of my tale intelligible. The result of my review of those around me was, that though I might serve a better government, I might be under a worse; that it gave hope to all, roused emulation, brought out the energies of employes, and prevented their hang-

ing on as excrescences and nuisances, when age, imbecility, or carelessness had rendered them a curse to the country. As a military despotism the government is a mild one; and, as a federal union, hastily patched up into a monarchy, it is strong and efficient. We may see its faults without overlooking its better points. But I must pause a moment to mention three Princes, whom I find I have omitted.

Kharak Singh, the eldest, is an imbecile, and affects the religious; Sher Singh, the second, is far from clever, but he is prudent; he is fond of imitating the military and Europeans. Tārā Singh, the third, is a dissolute vagabond, leading the most reckless life in the common *bazārs*. None of them appear much at *Dar-bār*, and the two latter are known not to be really sons of the Maharajah, who, perhaps, keeps quiet the mystery of their birth, as a check against any possible designs of his acknowledged son.

Again I say I do not offer my rough notes as materials for history, but rather as first impressions and crude gatherings from very probably interested informers. Few can be so simple as not to take all native reports "*cum grano*"; tho' the manner, and even matter of the report gives a clue as to its probable credibility. One man systematically lies within and without reason; he is as good as a weathervane, and is only to be read with caution, *topsy turvy*. Another sees what you want, fishes for it, thinks he has it, and tells accordingly. A third is paid for misleading you, and a fourth thinks he may be so. Another knows nothing, but wishes to be seen talking with the *farangi*. Having considered all the engines at work, if you scribble the evidence of one on a half-margin, and can manage to parallel it with that of another of different class, caste, profession and habits, and can keep each from knowing that the other is in your employ, you may then put some trust in their testimony, where it agrees, testing it however, when practicable, by further evidence. Give as little opinion of your own as possible; be merely seeking; *know* nothing, *think* nothing, or you will be made a tool in the hands of your own instruments. With so much of advice—by way of dessert to the dry meal I have given the reader, I will squat myself on the ground and take my own evening's repast. It was a fowl *pulāo*, which it had pleased my cook to make rich and savoury, and to me it tasted peculiarly so, nothing having passed my lips since my simple morning's meal,

and it was now evening. My custom was to rise before the dawn, to retire early, and seldom to repose during the day; a cake, or crust of bread with a glass of water when I got up, kept me till nine o'clock; and my breakfast satisfied me till sunset. When marching, the morning's crust and breakfast changed places. In fact my servants and myself have always partaken of the same pot, frequently of the same dish. No forbidden meat or liquor has passed my lips for years; and by strict temperance I have stood heat and fatigue that few Europeans could meet. The live-long day in the saddle has not prevented my rest at night; nor did a ride of nearly five hundred miles, (*k*), which I made in a week, interfere with my appetite or disturb my sleep. Abstinence and energy in yourself, and blood in your horses, will enable any man of good constitution to do as much. Thirty yards of fine muslin rolled round a European cap or hat, forms the best protection from the sun; but the night is the time for travelling for any one who intends to last long in the East.

While I was munching my *pulāo*, and, in fancy, galloping over the plains of the Panjāb, Chānd Khān entered. Observing that I had but one dish, and no drink but sugar and water, he was surprised. "Not drink, my lord! You never then will find favour in this besotted court, where all, with scarcely an exception, are drunkards, and where the strength of a man's brain is measured by the thickness of his head. And how does the Khān (*I*) like Sikh attire? for Ranjit Singh will want you to wear it. He has been making many enquiries about you, and has even had your servants up to examine them, just now you are in high favour, but he will expect you to comply with all his whims." "Then friend," I replied, "he will be disappointed;" and the thought struck me that a little judicious opposition might stand me in more stead than implicit acquiescence; but at any rate, I resolved neither to drink of his cup, nor to wear his garb. "I am not sure," I continued aloud, "that I shall take his service at all: I have friends in India, and may find employment with the British. At any rate, there are many princes who would be glad of my services. Shāh Shuja even now meditates the recovery of his kingdom, and what finer field could I have?" "Excellent, my lord; your slave with 50 good *shumsheres* is at your disposal—fire-eaters, men whose faces are seen in the day of battle." "Very well, Chānd Khān—if there be occasion, you shall not be forgotten."

I was pretty sure my expressed uncertainty would reach the Maharajah's ears; and so it did, with many exaggerations, increasing my value in his eyes ten fold. The next day, but one, was fixed for my second interview, but the next evening I expressed myself fatigued and unwell, and thus, on one pretext or other, put off my visit for a fortnight. Each day a *ziyāfat* of a hundred rupees, with sweetmeats, was brought. I was asked to administer strengthening medicine to the Monarch, he feeling altogether feeble, and fearing another attack of paralysis, which had already more than once deprived him of speech. I sent a preparation of steel, of which Dhyān Singh had the benefit. Right or wrong, such was his report of its efficacy, that from having no appetite it had made him ravenous, that in all his limbs he felt twice the strength he had before, and so forth—that the Maharajah was in raptures, sent for me imperatively, and ordered me to be informed that if I could not come to him, he would himself go to me (*m*); the messenger brought ten times the usual *ziyāfat*. "To-morrow I will attend His Highness" was my answer.

In the morning a guard of honor was in waiting, and in very different state from my former appearance, and attended by a *Sardār* of some standing, I was taken to the *Darbār*. Being seated on the carpet, close to His Highness, he asked me a hundred questions about Europe, England, America, of what caste I was myself, and of what were his European Officers. "For my own I can answer," replied I, "and you may write and ask Captain Wade at Ludiana. For your officers I cannot undertake to say; some of them are of good blood, but of one other I am somewhat doubtful. His countrymen are a bad set, but there is an old proverb, "that a white sheep may be found in a black flock." The Maharajah here interrupted me with a hearty laugh, whispers buzzed around, and the attendant *Mutawallis* used their pens. Dhyān Singh here put in his word, "The General," he said, (alluding to the second officer I had mentioned) "the General is a good man, and a *khoir shoodā*," many voices responded, "*bahot ach'chā—nāh admī, bahādūr, chhangā admī*," but I persisted, thereby affording Ranjit much amusement. "Well, but where is this wonderful medicine, which has done such wonders for the *Rajā*?" asked the Maharajah. I produced two papers, which he seized, and handed one over to his Minister. "Here *saqir*, take this." Azīzūdin's face was for a moment clouded, but he swallowed the steel, and affected instant

raptures. "Well, I will try the other myself," said Ranjit; and for a wonder actually took the dose. Without waiting to see its effects, he said to me, "Bellasis, I perceive you are a wise man; I have seen you and enquired about you; you are bold and you are able; you are young, but you have had experience; years and wisdom do not always go together; moreover I am pleased with you. I promised you the command of a Regiment, it is done; and in addition, I give you the management of the Kote Kangra district. It is wild and rugged in parts, but savage as is nature, man is there more so. I deal plainly with you; the post is one of difficulty, the country has been mismanaged: the revenues were nine *lákhs*; they are now less than six, from you I will, for two years, accept five. Your salary shall be fifteen thousand rupees a year, and I grant you the *nazardán* of your villages." "*Wáh, wáh, quismat! quismat!*" ejaculated many around. "You shall, in addition to your own Regiment of Lancers, have one of Infantry to keep up the place, and also two corps of *Najibs*; the latter you will raise yourself and appoint your own officers. The regular corps shall be detached from *Jamadár Khushiyál Singh's* brigade, and shall have a *tankwáh* on your revenues. Join without delay; attempt to have no secrets; leave a prudent *Vaqil* at the *Darbár*, and keep the *Raja* informed of all events. Remember that all I hear of you through other channels I put down against you. The post is high; the trust is great. Here" (and at a sign the *faqir* held out a sealed packet) "are your secret instructions. Again I say, be vigilant, cautious, prudent, and let no complaint from the *raiyats* reach the presence. *Rukhsat!* may fortune attend you."

A *Milat* of ten times the value of the last was then thrust upon me amid shoutings, praises, and murmurs from those around. A title, too long and flowery to repeat, was bestowed on me; a bag of a thousand ducats put into my hand, and I was turned out before I could half express my thanks. I hastened home much more importuned than on the last occasion; now, even first-rate *Sardárs* were pleaders, or offerers of humble congratulations; and many were the *unmedwárs* for *najibships*, and places of *Mutasaddi*, *Vaqil*, &c. Hastily, and almost roughly, I elbowed my way through them all, anxious to be alone, and open the sealed packet.

NOTES.

(a) In reference to Ranjit Singh providing for the families of his conquered enemies, it may be said that he usually granted either jagirs or small pensions to those he ousted, and sometimes even to those who had no claim on him. More than one connexion of the present royal house of Kabûl is a petty pensioner on Lâhaur. But Calcutta is the place that will figure in future history as the nest of Ex-rulers and fugitive Kings; there they congregate as of old to Rome, and there they follow the Governor-General's chariot wheels, though not to be cast from the top of the Ochterlony monument, when the triumph is over, but to have a choice of residence and a pension proportioned to their delinquencies; from eight lakhs of rupees per annum to *Raji Rao*, at Bhitâr, to *dâl-bâdt* and a dungeon at Chunar to *Mâna Jan*.

(b) *Jeswant Rao Holkar*, the *Mahrâthâ* Chief, of Indore, who cut off Colonel Monson's army, and thereby gained a high character in Hindustân. He afterwards encouraged the Raja of Bhartpur to withstand the English, and was encamped under the walls of that fortress when the gallant Lord Lake, with his most inadequate force, four times stormed the place. When the Raja eventually succumbed, Holkar fled across the Sutlej, and his after fate is little known.

(c) A live "adventurer in the Panjâb" told me that such was the introduction of Gulâb Singh to the Maharajah; but I have no further warrant for the fact. All the rest, however, that is here said of the Raja is within the truth, as is notorious to all who are acquainted with the Panjâb. Of late years such has been the audacity, ability and influence of the brotherhood, or rather of the two elder, that no year has passed without an extension of their territorial acquisitions; a fair sample of their doings is the fact that the first intimation Ranjit Singh received of operations on the Ladâk frontier was the announcement of the occupation of Ladâk itself by Zorawar Singh, the General of Gulâb Singh's troops.

(d) This Chief was for fifteen years the royal door-keeper; he is very wealthy, and has ability, but for want of firmness and conciliatory disposition has lost standing, he is harsh and at the same time fickle; his immediate brigade of three regiments has been in frequent mutiny; and his lax political faith prevents his being trusted by any party. But he has amassed great wealth, and has several connexions in the Maharajah's service; his son *Ram Singh*, died not long since; though but a lad himself, he had about a year before his own death, caused the only son of a respectable Commandant to be waylaid and murdered, because the boy had been the involuntary witness of an act of beastliness on his part, and had repeated the story. *Ram Singh*, however, died in his bed, a stripling General, while the father of the murdered lad, though a good officer and well known at *Darbâr*, has had little employment since, shewing what a court favourite may do even with shorn beams.

(e) I am not quite clear as to the rise of this official; but he is by birth a barber, and was at first known at Court by the title of *Hakim* or Doctor; physic and the razor going together in the East as formerly they did in the West. More than one of the conversations given in this book, as occurring with *Azizuddin* are real; he is a very eloquent and insinuating, and I believe not a bad man; trusted much by Ranjit Singh, both as a physician and counselor; and has kept his place with the present and late ruler. *Faqirs* and Doctors, *Mahomedan*, as well as Hindu and Sikh are treated with equal respect at the Lâhaur court. In *Azizuddin's* case the title is of course only assumed, but real beggars haunt the royal gardens and even the *Darbâr*. I was once myself insulted, when

travelling south of the Sutlej, by "a beggar on horseback" or at least, by one riding on a royal elephant, and attended by a silver stick.

(f) This worthy may be called "Accountant and Auditor General;" he and half a dozen other scribes successively examine the same accounts, passing nothing without vouchers; a plausible way to teach the straight forward that plain dealing is not always the way to get through business; for who that will cheat, will not fabricate? And how much easier is it to make out specious vouchers, than to do as any honest man will do, and deal with public money as he would with his own.

(g) The two first are brothers, sons of Basti Rām: Rām Singh has taken the *pahul*, (and is therefore a Sikh) which neither his brother or their father would consent to do; the latter ingratiated himself with Ranjit Singh, by secluding himself and never going to the Maharajah unless when sent for; nay it is said that the King always went to him, and in one of his visits asked Basti Rām if he was satisfied and comfortable, and if the almoner dispensed to him his share of the royal bounty; the other answered, "I get nothing, I cannot be a Hindoo; surely your money is not intended for me?" and then repeated a verse to the following effect:—

"When your dominion was complete,

"To me you gave a single sheet;

"To one scarce fit to be my slave,

"Jewels and robes and wealth you gave."

The Maharajah was pleased with his frankness, dismissed the unjust steward, put Basti Rām in his place, treated the old man until his death with all respect, and then took his sons into confidence as religious, medical and political advisers. Gurmakh Singh, the youngest son of Basti Rām, had only lately come into notice. The politics of the three brothers are opposed to those of Raja Dhyen Singh and his family. Beni Rām (*Mahr*) is nephew of another Basti Rām, who was treasurer to Ranjit, and also to his father; on the uncle becoming superannuated, Beni Rām, who had been some time before introduced into the treasury office, succeeded as treasurer: he was much trusted by Ranjit Singh, and bore the character of a respectable man and a good financier; on the Maharajah's death the treasurer was placed in irons (as said) because he would not betray his trust, and admit the young Prince, No Nihal Singh, into the treasury of his father the imbecile Maharajah Kharak Singh. Beni Rām is again at liberty and reinstated as treasurer.

(h) These officers have been already referred to in a note on the first chapter. The former is now dead; I have heard him called an intriguer, but believe he was only a good soldier, much respected by his men. It was the remnant of his egrissiers who rallied round M. Mouton in the disturbances of 1841, when that officer seemed about to share the fate of Mr. Polkes, whom his men had murdered. Allard was employed solely in a military capacity, nor indeed has any other trust been often committed to Ventura, who professes not to wish for any charge beyond that of his troops; but having had a share of civil, as well as military duty in Peshawar, Multan, and lately in Mandi, which he carried on very successfully, it would be but natural were he to wish for further opportunity of so distinguishing himself. M. M. Allard and Ventura came together through Persia and Afghanistan, into the Panjab; they are said to have suffered great distress on their travels and even to have officiated in the great mosque of Peshawar or Kabul ascriers to the morning prayers. The latter incident was mentioned by a confidential servant of Shah Zaman's, who very possibly may have exaggerated, or fabricated the tale.

M. M. Court and Avitable entered Ranjit Singh's service soon after the two above mentioned officers, (I believe in 1832.) They likewise came through Persia, and there served for a time; the former organized a corps of artillery for one of the Princes, but the Panjabi was a better pay-master than the Persian. Court has always been employed as a soldier, commanding a brigade or a division; he is a scientific man, modest, and honourable, and has feathered his nest less than any of his brethren.

Avitable is of a different stamp; he has ingratiated himself with many English officers, by his unbounded hospitalities at Peshawar; but, though possessed of energy and ability, there is little in his character to command respect. All that can be said in his favour is, that he has savages to deal with; but why should he deal with them as a savage? He might be as energetic and as summary as he pleased, and no one could object to his dealing with a lawless people in such manner as would restrain them in their practices; but he might spare us the scenes that so frequently occur in the streets of Peshawar equally revolting to humanity and decency.

Mr. Harlan, an American, is the only other *wildyā* (I was going to say European) who was much trusted by Ranjit Singh, and any love that may have obtained between them was converted into hate; Mr. Harlan was a man of strong passions, and seems to have taken little pains to restrain them: he was chiefly employed as a Civilian in the district of Gūkrāt, but his unflinching firmness lost him his service. He was a man of considerable ability, great courage and enterprise, and judging by appearances seemed peculiarly well cut out for the work of a stirring partizan; yet he was dismissed in no very flattering terms, and was not ashamed in after days to boast of having brought down Dost Mahomed on his former master, yet he had little success when he served the Affghans; shewing, perhaps, that the English and American temperament is less suited to the meridian of oriental court favour than the French and Italian, tho' history and fact shew which is best adapted for supremacy in this country.

No other European in the Lahaur service has a command exceeding two regiments, and not above three or four such individuals, in the rank of gentlemen, now remain there; these receive from £500 to £1000 per annum, but have no very enviable situations. There may be as many deserters and vagabond franks in the artillery receiving ten shillings a day. The mushroom military discipline attempted by Ranjit Singh never harmonized in its parts; discipline could not be established and upheld by the utmost exertions of a General standing alone without Colonel, Captain or Subaltern. Natives bearing those titles, may understand the drill, but it would require more than one generation to instill the discipline, the spirit of European Officers.

(i) This is the citadel of Amritsir, and supposed by the Sikhs to be impregnable; but it is more than doubtful whether it could stand a week against an artillery train; most of the royal treasures are there deposited, the remaining portion being in a *Musjid* and in the *Summan burj* at Lahaur. Imamūdīn, a younger brother of Azizūdīn's, was the civil Governor of Gobindgarh, but there was likewise more than one Thanadar there, independent of him.

(k) Though not a strong man I have made such rides without suffering, simply by adhering to the principles here laid down, which are I believe the best that can be followed in this country.

(l) *Khan*, literally Lord, is the distinctive affix of Affghan names, but is often applied indiscriminately as a title of respect.

(m) One of the Officers in the Lahaur service told the author, that a similar message was sent to him by Ranjit Singh.

CHAPTER THIRD.

CONTENTS.

"Ranjit's verdict on himself.—The Lion is the painter this time.—Laws are like spider's web, made to catch the weak, and let the strong escape.—A digression, shewing how to turn harmless zealots into formidable enemies.—Some forests produce very indigestible fruit.—You cannot open a lock till you apply the right key."

"Man only mars kind Nature's plan,
And turns the fierce pursuit on man;
Plying war's desultory trade,
Incursion, flight, and ambuscade;
Since Nimrod, Cush's mighty son,
At first the bloody game began."

Rohely.

— "as he said,
A bullet whistled o'er his head,
Swift from their steeds the riders bound,
But one shall never mount again;
Unseen the foes that gave the wound,
The dying asks revenge in vain,
Some fly behind the nearest rock,
And there await the coming shock,
Nor tamely stand to bleed
Beneath the shaft of foes unseen,
Who dare not quit their shaggy screen."

Glossur.

Hurrying into my dwelling, undressing and re-attiring in thin wide *pajamahs* and an *angarkha* or light shirt, I tore open the cover and proceeded to read; but to my dismay the paper presented only an assemblage of unintelligible cyphers; however as I unrolled the document, a slip of paper fell out, labelled "to be kept with care," and bearing the *faqir's* seal. In this I found a key to the cypher, and, after some puzzling, I read as follows:—"The wise man neglecteth not his duty towards his master; but taking

his seat in the hall of obedience, remembereth that humility and faithfulness cause exaltation. Falsehood brings a man to shame, and lying lips dishonor their possessor. Be then contented with the fortune that has been poured on thy head ; be faithful, honest, and true, and mankind will praise thee, and my favor will follow thee ; think of thine end, and oppress not the poor ; so shall thy name remain when all else of thee is gone." " Aha ! the rogue of a Maharajah has been at my friend Shekh Sâdi," said I, " however, his advice is good, and I hope he acts thus wisely and well himself." " Thus much of counsel for thee Bellasis, now give the ear of attention and the heart of obedience to the orders that follow. My kingdom is a great kingdom : it was small, it is now large ; it was scattered, broken and divided, it is now consolidated ; it must increase in prosperity and descend undivided to my posterity. The maxims of Taimur(a) have guided me ; what he professed, and ordered, I have done. By counsel and providence, combined with valor, I have conquered, and by generosity, discipline and policy, I have regulated and consolidated my government. I have rewarded the bold, and encouraged merit wherever it was to be found : on the field of battle I exalted the valiant, with my troops I have shared all dangers, all fatigues. Both on the field and in the cabinet I shut partiality from my soul and closed my eyes to personal comfort ; with the robe of empire, I put on the mantle of care, I fed *sajids* and holy men and gained their prayers ; the guilty as the innocent I spared ; and those whose hands were raised against myself have met my clemency ; Sri-Purak-jî has therefore been merciful to his servant, and increased his power, so that his territory now extends to the borders of Chin and the limits of the Affghans, with all Multân, and the rich possessions beyond the Sutluj. To be the favored servant of such a monarch, honor ; to serve such a *Raj* is dignity. You are always to reside in the fort of Kângrâ ; or, during necessary absences, you will leave your most trusty follower ; be he your immediate *nâib*, or who else, he must be a second self. His and your orders are, to hold the fortress against all comers, be they who they may, my son, minister, or servant ; bear they my *sanad* or not ; no one gains admittance, not even myself, until thrice I have thrust my head in at the wicket, and thrice thou hast thyself examined my beard(b) : then, and then only, may the gate be opened. You are

to keep an eye upon all neighbours, from Kashmir to Belâspur, apprizing the *fakir* instantly of any movement at Jamma, Nurpur, or Mandi. If symptoms of disturbance arise in any quarter, or any opportunity offers for extending our influence, be watchful, and report; but in no way act, except in self-defence, without express orders; and then, be not hasty, knowing that the royal mind may change, or affairs take a different turn. Much is not said, but you have penetration and will understand. My servants are wise and obedient, and it would be cruel to tempt them by negligence to be otherwise. Think not then that suspicion reigns in my breast, far otherwise; the *Sardars* around Kāngrā are in especial favor; may they long continue to deserve it. Caution, however, and foresight prevent calamity. Bellasis, be prudent, be vigilant, be cautious."

Thus ended this strange epistle: it contained another in the ordinary character, being an order to the governor to give up the fort and territory of Kāngrā to the High-in-rank, the favored of the Maharajah, the Well-wisher, the Valiant-in-battle, and the Wise-in-Darbar, Colonel Bellasis. The latter epistle was signed by Rajah Dhyān Singh, and another, much to the same effect, had the seal of Azizūddīn. Both bore the Maharajah's signet and private marks; but my cypher had only the *fakir's* name attached.

My time was busily occupied for the next week in preparation for my command; my success had been beyond my hopes; the office was an important one, but being in the hills, much enhanced its value. Night and day was I now engaged, surrounded with *ummediwārs* with new levies, civil and military, horse and foot; every creature that could crawl considered himself entitled to serve me, and expect my favor; even Nand Singh was not above offering me a dozen recruits; from each of whom I doubt not, he received a douceur of a month's pay. Every man who had seen me enter the town, now considered himself as my friend; all who had spoken to me became my brothers; elephants and horses, arms of all sorts, sabres of every price, from Damascus blades, that by the turn of a wrist could cut horizontally through an orange placed on the end of a spear, to eight-anna blades of the Lahaur bazār; matchlocks as various, from the beautiful Sāindh barrels to the commonest trumpery; all were for sale around me, and my levies and *ummediwārs* were careering about, strutting and making the most of themselves in every garb and every manner. But

Chând Khân was in especial feather ; he considered me as it were his own ; the child of his making ; and almost against my will I took to him scarcely less kindly. He offered himself as my *nâib* ; this I refused ; but said he should remain as my *vagil* at the *Darbâr*, on the condition however of giving up his present questionable practices ; he was an *honest* man, and followed the business more for the sport than the profit ; he had therefore some difficulty in deciding whether he should serve the state or oppose it ; he could not do both ; be the servant of the Maharajah's servant and an avowed robber ; with many a sigh, he accepted my terms, I consenting to take into employ fifty of his countrymen, whom indeed I was glad to get, for they were all stout hands, well acquainted with the country. Aliverdi Khan, the head of them, was a particularly smart intelligent fellow and did me good service. Of Chând Khan's inherent trustiness I had some slight doubts ; but taking him in all he was much the man I wanted ; he knew every body, and feared no one, was bold, and had been true to the salt of his former master ; a good earnest of fealty to the new one. However, while ostensibly trusting him entirely, I took care to leave one of my own servants, a quiet, steady man, by name Morâd Beg, to look after my *vagil* ; he was not to make acquaintance with Chând Khân, but was simply to keep me apprized of his habits and haunts ; mentioning how he generally passed his time, who were his associates, and what places he frequented.

To Chând Khân I explained that he must regularly attend *Darbâr* ; that, whether he had heard from me or not, he was daily to present my dutiful respects ; that beyond this, he was to be silent, give no opinions, and ask no questions ; to appear as stupid as possible, but to have all his ears and eyes open. I told him that if he once deceived me, we parted ; but that if he faithfully served me, his stipulated pay should be but a small part of his profits ; and that, for every definite piece of intelligence he should be separately paid, according to its value. In time of need, he was to send me any extra intelligence, at any cost ; and for ordinary occasions, I was to station two *Harkâras* at every twenty *kos*. I did not disguise from Chând Khân that my aims were high, and he needed little argument to shew that master and servant must rise or fall together. I left with him money to buy over all who were to be bought ; well knowing that the humming of a hundred insects is louder than the voice of one man, that any one about the

court may reach any preferment, and that the most insignificant of those who have access to the palace, may prove useful. Nand Singh I found associated with me, not only as Major of the Lancers, but as Deputy of the fort ; and I was ordered always to keep a squadron of my regiment in the garrison. Ranjit, with all his apparent confidence, had jumped at this arrangement on perceiving the sinister glances Nand Singh directed towards me on the day of his catastrophe, " 'Tis well," said I to myself, " We'll try the fellow's metal." Before the week was over, I had enlisted thirteen hundred men ; my Lancers mustered seven hundred, and Khushiyal Singh's regiment, eight hundred ; I had besides, six light guns, so that I made a formidable appearance as I moved to my first camp, a few miles beyond the city of Lahaur.

Before starting, I had been admitted to another interview with the Maharajah, who received me with great favor : as before, he asked many questions, seemed pleased at my understanding his dumb shew, and drew me out to tell of the adventures I had seen. In return, he talked of his own early career, and told me I should come to the interview he was to have with the Governor-General of India at Rupar.

Before quitting the *darbar*, I had some specimens of justice in the Panjáb. A *bhaya* or orderly, whom I had noticed as I passed through the street, helping himself and horse gratis, from a corn-chandler's shop, brought in a miserable creature accused of stealing a melon from the garden. The culprit was ordered to be tethered like a horse, for a twelve month, and to be kept lying on his belly with his arms and legs at full stretch. Another man, accused of even some slighter offence, had his nose split. A *Brahman* rushing into the presence in frantic tones, called for justice ; with difficulty he was made to explain, that Sirdar Fattah Singh Mán had seized the ten *bighas* of land his family had held in *dharamarat* for forty generations ; his Highness's reply, that his case would be investigated, was so little satisfactory, that the complainant tore open his breast, and before he could be stopped, had inflicted several deep gashes on his person ; the man was one of a class called *Ch'kurí mar(c)*, who thus extort justice, and by such summary *dharna* often gain their ends ; the eventual fate of the *Brahman* I never heard. Scarcely was the bleeding wretch disposed of, when the principal *Zamindars* of a district, against the renter of which a charge was wanted, were called in. Either there was no cause of com-

plaint, or they had got their cue from the renter, for their evidence went to prove that even less than the assessment had been taken from them. This was a sad mistake in their policy, and to bring them to reason, one was ordered to stand on hot bricks. Ranjit, however, did not delight in witnessing pain, and let the man off in a few moments, mulcting the district, however, twenty thousand rupees, having already kept the poor creatures hanging off and on for four months. Perhaps my presence benefited the prisoners, for his Highness was always anxious to shew well before *farangis*.

Before I got my dismissal, I was shewn the crown jewels, and among them, the Koh-i-nur(*d*); but all these things have been described so often, that I will pass them by. Altogether the appearance of the Lion's Court was not what I expected: indeed I have seen more of state, as well as of real dignity among Princes of much inferior rank. Ranjit himself was plainly dressed, generally wearing a green turban; and a rich pearl necklace was almost his only ornament. Hira Singh, a boy of about ten years old, and son to Dhyān Singh, sat always beside the Maharajah, and was richly bedizened; a few of the younger courtiers were gaudily attired, and I have seen one of them wearing three pair of gold bracelets, and three necklaces, besides rings, ear-rings, and jewelled dagger. But these were exceptions, and the usual Sikh attire like the Hindu, is plain and unadorned.

This being in a manner a private visit, I did not receive a *khilat*, but the Maharajah, with his own hand, gave me a beautiful match-lock, saying it was true for eight hundred yards, "and if I judge rightly, Bellasis, it will have none but fair play in your hands." At this compliment, I observed one of the European officers twirl his moustache, and glances pass across the hall.

At this interview I was grave and reserved, which the Maharajah noticing, said, "why, he seems as if under punishment!" "No, your Highness," I replied; "but, when your servant first came into the presence, he had no responsibilities; he had but his good horse to care for, and his sword to look to. The friendless has been exalted, and has now the cares and wants of many to think of, and above all, he has your Highness' interests to watch." "Wisely and well said, Bellasis, but your cares are premature your foot is hardly yet in the stirrup, you need not yet affect the ruler." I observed a sneer on more than one lip, and with as haughty a look as

I could assume, I glanced round the room and said. "Before his benefactor the servant is all humility; but even in the presence, the ravens envy the eagle." "There are good men present, Bellasia," said Ranjit, evidently urging me on. "Yes," said Tej Singh, a great, huge fellow, calling himself General, and nephew of Khushi-yâl Sing, "many that could trample on an upstart horse-jockey, who, I'll be bound, had nothing better than an ass to ride in his own country." A loud laugh was raised, in which I joined and added, "Even on such an animal I would put down an unwieldy boaster, and cram a spear down his throat, as easily as he would a *chapātū*."

The monster half rose, but the Maharajah bade him be still, and some of the leading *Sardārs*, among whom were Lena Singh Majitā, and Atar Singh(e), appeared annoyed at the fracas; the *faqir* and Dhyân Singh, too, interfered to change the train of conversation; the *darbār* broke up, and I got my *rukhsat*. That evening Chând Khân came to me with an air of great importance, and took an opportunity when we were alone, of slipping a note into my hand; adding, "The *sāhib* is doubtless aware that *Sardār* Lena Singh Majitā cannot be uninterested in the affairs of *Kāngrā*." I reproved the *saqil* for allowing himself to be drawn from the strictly neutral position which I had assigned to him, but I was not displeased at the note itself, the purport of which was that I might find difficulties I little expected in taking possession of my fortress, but that in Lena Singh I had a friend at Court. My new ally will be mentioned more at large hereafter; suffice it now to say that he was a mechanic and an astronomer, as well as a good soldier and a virtuous man. He was by far the best specimen of the Sikh *Sardārs*, and was much respected by all parties. Before setting out on my journey, or entering on the web of intrigue already weaving around my steps, I must digress for a few minutes to give a slight outline of the extraordinary people among whom I had fallen; and in sketching them, I shall borrow largely from Sir John Malcolm.

In A. D. 1469, Nānak Shāh, or Guru Nānak, the founder of the Sikh (f) sect, was born at Talwandi on the banks of the Beyāh, (or Hyphasis); his father was a Hindu of the military caste, tho' engaged in business. The son refused to follow his father's employment, but turned all his thoughts to religion, and at an early age

travelled into every part of the East, conversing with all ranks, and even disputing with the Emperor Bâbar. The grounds of his doctrine were, the Unity and Omnipresence of God; and his object was, to shew both Musalmâns and Hindus that they were equally in error. He died, and was buried at Kartapur on the Râvî. The precepts of Nânak and of his two successors were collected by the fourth Guru, Arjammal, into the *Adhâ Granth*, or first book of the Sikhs' holy writings. By this work Arjammal brought himself into notice and incurred suspicion. He was imprisoned and put to death by the Mahomedan authorities, in A. D. 1606. His murder roused his followers, and persecution ensued, which worked out its usual consequences. The hitherto peaceful Sikhs united themselves under Har Govind, the son of their murdered leader, into a band, bent on vengeance. Har Govind, and his grandson who succeeded him, passed a life of persecution, and were soldiers more than priests. The Delhi empire was then in its zenith, and the Sikhs were but a handful. Nânak, to conciliate the Mahomedans, had forbidden hog's flesh to his followers; but Har Govind made all flesh except that of the cow, lawful; he studied in every way to make his followers hardy, and inure them to fatigue. Upon his death, the succession was disputed, and between internal dissensions and Moslem persecution, the sect was nearly exterminated: when, after one or two intervening priesthoods, the Guru Teg Bahâdar was put to death, and left to his son Govind, A. D. 1675, a heritage of revenge, which, boy as he was, he took up. He acquired the fort of Anandpur Mâkiwâl on the Sutlej, and made fundamental changes in the Sikh policy; for, whereas Nanak interfered little with the civil institutions of the Hindus, Guru Govind declared all men equal; and some of the sweeper caste, who had brought his father's corpse from Delhi, were rewarded with high rank and employment. Their descendants are now known as Rangrâtâ Singhs. Govind likewise changed the designation of his followers from Sikh to Singh, which means lion; thus setting an object of ambition before the very scum of the earth; he desired that they should be all soldiers, wear blue, and carry steel; on meeting, their watchword was to be "Wah, Guru-ji ke khâlsa! Wah, Guru-ji ke futteh!" He instituted the Guru Mât, or grand council at Amritsir, and wrote the *Dusma Grânth*, which tells of his exploits, as well as expounds the law: he made many gallant stands against the Emperor of Delhi's Officers, and particularly de-

fended Chamkaur (*g*) to extremity ; his eventual fate is wrapped in mystery. Gura Govind was the tenth, and last acknowledged leader of the Sikhs, and is looked on as the originator of their political greatness. But Bândâ, one of his devoted followers, taking advantage of the troubles that followed Aurangzeb's death in A. D. 1707, after several petty successes, ventured to encounter Fauj-dâr Khân, Governor of Sarhind, hated by the Sikhs as the murderer of Govind's children. Bândâ was the victor, and sacked Sarhind, destroying all, of every sex and age, who would not become Sikhs ; he defiled the Mosques, and, leaving Sarhind a heap of ruins, he overran the whole country to the Jumna. Even Saharanpur did not entirely escape him, and he only stopped at Pânipat, from whence he retired, and afterwards defeated the Viceroy of Lâhaur. Eventually he was hemmed in, in the fort of Lohgad, under the hills North East of Lâhaur, and there starved into surrender, sent to Delhi, and cruelly put to death.

The Sikhs consider Bândâ as a heretic, though a brave leader : he tried, though unsuccessfully, to introduce many changes ; the Akâlîs (*h*) opposed his innovations ; and as defenders of the faith, have since arrogated to themselves the exclusive right of wearing the blue turban and attire. On Banda's death, the Moslems waged a war of extermination against the Sikhs ; all who escaped fled to the hills North East of Lâhaur, and remained almost forgotten for thirty years, until Nâdir Shah's invasion, when they plundered those who fled from him. When the victor returned from Delhi, laden with spoil, the Sikhs hung on his rear, and got a rich booty. On Nâdir's death, taking advantage of the weakness of Lâhaur, they issued from their fastnesses, recruited, and carried their arms through the Pânjâb, till they re-possessioned themselves of Amritsir.

The Sikhs had followed Bândâ as a military leader, but Govind was their last Guru : and after him, they were governed by their own immediate Sardârs, great and small, strong and weak ; a constitution that could only have been held together by the external pressure of persecution. At the Guru Mât, however, a leader was always elected, and rank and influence there, as elsewhere, had their weight ; common danger united them, oppression, thirst of vengeance, and the distractions of their enemies, were all links in the chain of their confederacy.

The first Afghân eruption, A. D. 1746, benefited their cause :

they took advantage of it to seize the Jalandar Doâh ; they were kept in check, however, by Mir Manû, the Governor of Lahaur, who was only prevented from pressing them harder by the influence of a Sikh in his service. His *Nâib* and successor, Adîna Beg, encouraged the Sikhs for his own purposes and as a check to the Afghâns. Ahmad Shah Abdâlli enraged at their daring, and at the countenance they received from Delhi, invaded India, resolved on their punishment. The Sikhs avoided coming to an engagement, but hung on his baggage. On his return to Kâbul, Ahmad left his son Paimur to chastise them ; he took Amritsir, defiled their temples, and filled up their holy tank ; these outrages exasperated the Sikhs, who rose *en masse*, drove him out of the Pânjâb, and triumphed so far that one of their rulers even took Lahaur, and coined rupees with the impression of " Khâlsâh-ji." Their former friend, Adina Beg Khân, was now glad to call in the Mahrâthâs to recover from the Sikhs his Subâ of Lahaur, and these new allies, under Râgonâth Râo, after taking Sarhind, swept like a tempest as far as the Atak, dispossessing both Afghâns and Sikhs of Lahaur and the other towns. The troubles in the south soon recalled the Mahrâthâs, who left Adina Beg as their Governor at Lahaur. He died within a few months, and the Sikhs again seized the capital. Ahmad Shâh, after his victory at Pânîpat, once more endeavoured to subdue the Sikhs, and drove them before him from one end of the Pânjâb to the other, and took Amritsir, razing its walls, and again filling up its sacred tank. He made pyramids of Sikh heads, and washed with their blood the mosques they had polluted ; but on his return to Kâbul, they attacked and drove out his governors, seized Lahaur, and destroyed the mosques he had just purified. The same scenes were enacted the following year. Ahmad Shâh again took Lahaur, and the Sikhs again took advantage of his retiring to re-take it, and as long as he lived, continued to molest his troops, rarely coming to a battle, but actively and perseveringly galling them ; and themselves flying to the hills, when hard pressed. The anarchy that followed the death of Ahmad, and the even greater weakness of the Delhi throne, gave the Sikhs ample opportunity to subdue the Pânjâb, and consolidate their power : what they ascribe to their own institutions and courage, is mainly attributable to this decay of the empires on either side. Their religious system, attractive as it was to low-born Hindus, never found much favour with the higher castes

or with the Mahomedans, and their policy of having every village chief his own master, carried in itself the elements of dissolution. Had an enemy appeared, or had not a master spirit arisen among themselves, they would doubtless have sunk into insignificance; for, even now, after years of unbroken prosperity, their numbers are quite insignificant, and I doubt whether the whole Panjáb contains a quarter of a million of Sikhs: the chief part of them are to be found in the *Mánjah*(*i*), about Amritsir and Lahaur, and among the *Sardárs* and court retainers. A Sikh cultivator is rarely seen, most of that occupation being Hindus or Musalmáns, the former being perhaps as two to one, and the Musalmáns prevailing to the westward. I should loosely estimate the population of the Panjáb at about quarter of a million of Sikhs, half a million of Musalmáns and three quarters of a million of Hindus. The whole system of the Sikhs is unfavourable to the multiplication of their race; continual feuds must cut off great numbers, and their habits are uncongenial to fruitfulness; there probably is not a more dissolute race on the face of the earth; and though by their active habits, some do live to good old age, yet most are childless, and a large family is never found: they all drink, and eat *bhángá* and opium. A large proportion of the troops are Hindu and Musalmán, either in separate corps, or mixed up with Sikhs; indeed, Ranjít Singh very wisely cares less for caste and country than for good legs and shoulders; his infantry, when I joined, amounted to perhaps thirty-five thousand; with as many cavalry, of all classes, and sixty guns. The first are steady on parade, and good looking men, but manœuvre slowly; the cavalry are ill-mounted, and inferior to almost any I have seen; the guns(*4*) are badly got up, and there does not seem an efficient artilleryman among them; against an European enemy they would, after the first discharge, be only an incumbrance, and would probably induce defeat. Ranjít himself estimates his troops pretty fairly, and has directed them against the weak points of his frontier, obeying the least hint from the British Agent at Ladianá, and counting the territory south of the Suteluj as his own, only by the sufferance of the English. Perhaps there is no stronger proof of his judgment than that in twenty-three years, no quarrel should have arisen between him and them, intimately mixed as is his territory with the states under their protection.

But, to return to my own personal narrative; the day after my last audience, I set out on my journey, the order of march being,

a squadron of lancers in front; next, Khushiyāl Singh's regiment; then the guns; after them, my new levies; and the body of lancers under Nand Singh, bringing up the rear.

For some days all went smoothly; I admired the careless good-humour of the Sikhs, and was surprised at my deputy's suddenly improved air and demeanour. He would often come up, and respectfully ride by my side, or a little behind me, most zealously concurring to my comfort, and obviating every possible trouble. The good-humour of the men was extreme, though somewhat damped by my prohibiting plunder, and ordering every thing to be paid for. As soon as we reached our ground, the men, horse and foot, scattered over the country, often going five and eight miles for forage, and renewing the march next morning with as much alacrity as if they had slept all day. "Good material," said I, "for an army; only wanting good pay and good leaders to make you crack fellows." As we advanced, Nand Singh's attentions increased; two or three dark-looking fellows of his were constantly at my elbow; I did not like their looks, but they were smart and active, and forestalled all my wants. Of an evening, I usually wandered forth with a gun over my shoulder; and now, as we approached the low hills, my trips were longer and more frequent, sometimes prolonged till after nightfall. Ali Verdi Khān, and my own *Pesh Khidmat*, Hassān Ali, took me to task for this. "Does not the *sāhib* see what scoundrels there are about the camp? There are a hundred that would shoot you for the bit of lace on your cap, and a thousand, for your gun. Besides, you are not without enemies; and we have of late observed your steps watched." I laughed, and said, "this rifle and pair of good bull-dogs would do for half a dozen, not to speak of my sword; and *you* count yourselves something." "True, *sāhib*, we do," and one stroked his beard, and the other twisted his whiskers; "yes, *sāhib*, we are not either of us Sikhs; but still, it is not wise to act thus; the best beloved have enemies, and few are so considerate as to give notice when they mean to attack." I so far listened to advice, as to permit four of Ali Verdi's *Multānīs* to follow me on horseback at a little distance, but I did not give up my sport.

One evening we had shot a hog-deer, a florican, and some black partridge; and at sun-set turned campwards. We had mounted, and had five miles of tangled, uneven ground to cross, with two

deep, raviny *nālās* ; had passed the first, and in the second, not more than half a mile from camp, there was about two feet of water; the banks were lined with brushwood about a man's height, through which we had carefully picked our way, for it was now dark. The Multānis had closed up, and we were in all nine persons; when in the middle of the stream a volley of fifteen or twenty matchlocks opened upon us, at a distance of not above thirty yards from both flanks, on the side to which we were going. "Spread out, men, and push across: do not fire, but have at the dogs with your *talwārs*," was my cry, as I heard the balls whistling about my ears. We dashed across before they could re-load, but the ruffians threw themselves into the brushwood, and though we beat about, we could not dislodge one. The next best thing to catching them was to push home and see after this matter. "Shove on my lads! But how stand we? No one hurt I hope?" My followers gathered round at my voice, but I found we only mustered seven. "Ha! who is missing," Rāmjān the Multāni, and Hassan Ali." "Hasten back to the *nālā*, then, and look for them, perhaps our delay may cost their lives!" As we returned, a horse, wild with terror, tried to rush past us, nearly breaking our ranks: it was the Multāni's, who with a death grasp clung to the animal. In the dim light, we did not at first perceive the rider, but seizing hold of the reins, discovered that the poor fellow had been shot thro' the head, and had fallen forwards, convulsively throwing his arms round the horse, when his sharp, unoccupied, stirrups, dangling against the animal, urged him forward. The sudden stop brought the lifeless burthen to the ground, and we found, to our sorrow, that he was quite dead. Hassan Ali had been more fortunate; his horse was shot, and had reared and fallen over with him; the friendly stump of a tree saved him from worse inconvenience than the temporary imprisonment and a good wetting. We helped him out of the *nālā*, left two of our party to watch the corpse till we could send a *chārpāl* for it, and pushed on for camp; but before we arrived we were met by lights, *masāls*, and hundreds of wild figures, in every degree of disarray, shouting and yelling like fiends. The volley, sharp and loud, was carried by the wind; and coming at such an hour from the direction I was in, caused more than suspicion; the bugle sounded to arms, and, in less time than a regiment of European cavalry would take to bit their horses,

my jolly fellows were bearing towards me. The wild and hearty shouts that greeted my advance were very grateful to me, but there was little time for words. "Follow me to my tent, men! Order a muster of the lancers; and you, Ali Verdi Khan, turn out Wāhāb and Khairāt Ali, the trackers, and return to the ford; tell them I'll give five hundred rupees for every man that they prove concerned." "Good, my Lord; your servant is ready." In a few minutes the lancers were paraded by torch-light; most seemed, and expressed themselves, delighted at my return, though they hardly understood why I so scrutinized their countenances, and Nand Sing fretted at my suspicions. All were present except one, Muhammed Shāh, a peculiar favourite of the Major's, and one who of late had been much about me. His absence was readily explained by three or four comrades, who said that he with them had been out foraging, but that his horse, being a little lame, had lagged behind. "And where is your nag? Mohar Singh," said I to a raw-boned Sikh, who looked rather foolish standing in his place. "Was it not reported instantly," exclaimed Nand Singh, "that the poor fellow's horse died of a fit of the gripes as we came up to our ground to-day?" "It is that which makes you look so blown my man, is it? Ah, well,—Major, send Muhammed Shāh to me as soon as he comes up."

In about an hour the man presented himself, his horse looked fresh, but out of condition. "you do not," said I, "look after him; if you lose your horse you'll lose your service." I said no more, for at a glance I perceived that the animal was none of his own, but a rip belonging to Nand Sing, lent for the occasion. My suspicions were more than confirmed; however I ordered a distribution of sweetmeats and a halt the next day, in reward of the ready interest of the troops in my behalf. Though I said nothing, Ali Verdi Khan and Hassan Ali, and some of the lancers too, were not slow in asserting that the attack had been planned by Nand Singh. "Did we not see him whispering to that huge Sikh who lost his horse in the skirmish? and to that little blackguard Muhammed Shāh, who is a devil incarnate? It was not an hour before you started that they were talking together. And do you not remember that in the morning Nand Singh recommended you to go in that direction for game? but advised you not to fire till you had crossed the second nālā? This morning some wild shaggy looking fellows, who have

been hanging about the camp, were seen by Saifdar Khān who was with the advance: about two hours before we arrived, they took the direction of the hills." "Well, my good friends, thanks for your zeal, but be silent, or you will do me harm. I am awake, quite awake, but we must make sure before we strike."

During the day, Ali Verdi returned; he brought the heron's feather of a trooper's plume; none such were in my cap, but the lancers wore them; this was found among the prints of many feet on one flank of the *ghāt*, where there were also tracks of a horse's feet; Ali Verdi had, with Wāhāb, followed these traces a mile along the *nalā*; the shoes were inverted, but this did not for a moment deceive the old *Khojē*, who observed that it only made the hind feet appear to go before the fore ones. They then turned, and joined Khairāt Ali, who was leisurely following similar tracks on the other side of the *nalā*, where, after keeping the bank for a short distance, they had returned, and attempted to keep in their own footsteps; it seemed that the presence of a horse had put them out, and that after the first few yards they had thrown him down, lashed his legs together, and carried him on their shoulders, to avoid detection from his foot prints. When they reached the *ghāt*, they rightly thought that amid so much trampling it would be difficult to trace them; but, though beyond the *ghāt* the men's tracks were detected, there was no further trace of the horse, and the men evidently wore, to disguise their foot prints, web shoes, formed with the heel, both fore and aft: so that none but an experienced hand who could detect the comparative pressure left by the weight of the hind and fore-part of the foot, could have told which way the party went. Ali Verdi left the *Khojēs* with every hope of a successful pursuit.

The next morning I renewed the march, leaving Ali Verdi with a hundred men to aid the trackers, and both money and promises to expedite their movements: there was something kindly and frank in the man that took me from the first, and I could not have deputed a trustier hand.

The attack was duly reported at *darbār* as an unforeseen and ill understood affair, the work probably of a party of Kozāks, on whose track we now were, and would soon report further.

Nothing further of note occurred, until we reached Kāngrā, on approaching which I mustered all my diplomacy, anticipating that

I should not easily effect an entrance, although armed with a royal *fārmān*, and backed by a large body of troops. However, I was not wont to distrust myself; I called a halt, when within one march of the fort, and sent on my *pesh khidmat* with a courteous letter to the governor, enclosing copies of the open *pariwānās*. I took the opportunity to inspect my followers, and was agreeably surprised to find no symptom of fatigue among them; the horses seemed even improved, and small as they were, I never saw such hardy, active creatures: one of them had particularly attracted my attention, he was a little bay, scarcely higher than a pony; his master, Hakim Singh (*I*), a trooper, in the lancers, was one of my orderlies, and the fellow seemed perfectly ubiquitous, he was always *hāzir*, always ready to gallop off at my bidding, and the little nag appeared always as ready as his master.

During the day, an answer came from Kāngrā, very much what I expected:—"The honor is very great, nothing could please Colonel Dandāwar Singh better than to yield place to so great a *bahādar* as myself; but then, he was strictly enjoined by the Maharajah to admit no one; not even his son, no, nor himself, till after certain preliminaries; think, then, most excellent *sāhib*, whether I could disobey such an order? You will therefore favour your servant by withdrawing your troops from Kāngrā territory." By no means daunted, I sent off Captain Fareb Khān, with a squadron of horse, and two hundred select infantry, bearing a note from me to the following effect, "Dandāwar Singh is a wise man, a faithful servant, and a good soldier; his fame is well known. His friend would fain emulate him and gain a like renown. But bearing the Maharajah's order, given in open *darbār*, Colonel Bellasis would have his face for ever blackened, were he to return without executing his commission. The wise Dandāwar Singh will therefore understand that duty cannot be set aside; but, appreciating his merits, Colonel Bellasis wishes that the transfer of Kāngrā should be made with all courtesy, and in the manner most grateful to its present gallant governor. As the latter has been long absent from the presence, and may not understand the improvements of the day, his servant, in the way of friendship, sends him a shell, a specimen of those received from the English, and adapted to the guns now here, which can be pointed in such a way as to send the shell to the top of the highest hill, even to the clouds. By means of a match in a hole in the shell, and which is just such a length as to last till

it reaches its destination, the missile is blown to atoms, scattering its death-dealing contents around. Perhaps my friend might like to see the experiment tried; if so, a couple of my guns are at his service."

Neither my kindness, nor my polite hint had any effect, I therefore moved my camp to a convenient position beyond range of the fort, and rode about, to look out for a weak point; but I found the place well supplied within itself, stronger in every way than I had anticipated, occupied by a garrison of greater strength than the whole force under me, and headed by one of the ablest of Gulāb Singh's officers; for the governor was but his creature, and on my departure from Lahaur had been reinforced with men and supplies, and ordered by his master to hold the place to the last extremity. Kāngrā had been often attacked but never taken, the Gurkhās after remaining before it for twelve months, had eventually raised the siege, it was only by capitulation that it fell into the hands of the Sikhs; and it has always, with reason, been considered as their strongest fortress. It stands on a hill, and on three sides it is surrounded by the Bān Gangā, a river at all times breast deep; on the fourth side it is separated from another projecting hill, called Jainti Mātā, by a deep dell, half a *kōs* wide. Could I, in the face of the garrison, have effected a lodgement by the *Devi-stān* (m) on the summit of the Jainti Mātā, the sanctity of the place would have aided me; but the range, I saw, was too long for my light guns. Understanding too, from my spies, that the garrison was not only victualled for years, but that in its tank and springs it was free from the usual deficiency of hill forts, I saw no chance of success, except in a *coup de main*; and that I resolved on the very next night.

Accordingly, in the evening I moved my guns towards Jainti Mātā, and detached a party in the direction of each of the two gates that looked that way, and I purposed, according to the expedient so often successfully tried by the English, to effect intending to blow them in; for the ascents, tho' steep, would not, for Europeans, at least, be supposed by the garrison to be impracticable. The guns, however, were merely to take up such a position as would enable them to throw shells into Kote Kāngrā, while two select parties of 500 men each, were to take the bull by the horns; and crossing the river at different points, were to make the assault at midnight. The signal was to be given by the guns in the opposite directions;

and, by a chain of small parties all round the hill, (a circuit of five *kós*) keeping up as heavy a fire as possible, while the two real attacks moved up silently, I had great hopes, amid the distraction and surprise, to effect an entrance.

All was arranged, and a reward of a thousand rupees, with promotion on the spot, was promised to the man who should be first within the works; when, just before nightfall, a horseman, whose fine sinewy steed's convulsive sobs told what exertions had been made by the rider,—dashed into the Camp, shewed the Maharajah's *misal* and craved passage into the Fort. He passed, entered, and before an hour, a message arrived from the Governor that at dawn the gates should be opened.

NOTES.

(a) The "Institutes of the lame Tartar" would bespeak him a great man, an able, just, and benevolent Monarch; but his acts form a melancholy contrast to the writings he dictated.

(b) This is the order, which, I understand, Ranjít actually gave to one of his Governors, and it is in conformity with his jealous distrustful spirit.

(c) Literally, strikers with the knife, men who to extort alms or sympathy, gash themselves with knives, inflicting flesh wounds on their breasts and arms, and thus frightening lookers on into compliance with their demands.

(d) Literally *mountain of light*, is a diamond an inch and a half long, and an inch wide; it was the chief ornament of the "Peacock throne" of the Great Mogul; Nadir Sháh seized it when he plundered Delhi in 1738; and Ahmad Sháh Abdallí got possession of it in the scramble that succeeded Nadir's assassination; from him it descended to his son Taimur, and again to his sons as they successively seized the Government: Sháh Shuja succeeded in carrying it with him in his exile, and in the year 1813 when in the Panjáb, supplicating for aid from the Sikh in the recovery of his kingdom, the latter ungraciously demanded the diamond, put many indignities on the fallen monarch and his family, and threatened even more, unless the jewel was given up to him; and by such conduct became its possessor.

(e) The first of these *Sardárs* has some smattering of science, and is as much above his fellow countrymen in respectability as in mechanical knowledge. The second is the son of Ammar Singh Sandáwálí; and a cousin of the Maharaja's. He is rather a respectable man, for a Sikh, but his brother Lena Singh (not the person of the same name mentioned above as a superior man) is a noted drunkard, and their nephew Ajít Singh, is a forward youth of more pretension than power. As kinsmen of the Royal family they are looked up to at *darbár*.

(f) The word *mea* is a disciple, a scholar from the word *sikha*, to learn.

(g) A considerable town on the south bank of the Suteluj. The confederated Sikhs, after they had sacked Sarhind in 1768, gave it in fee tenure to the Sodás, who are the descendants of Guru Govind.

(h) Literally Immortals (or without death), the title of what may be called the Knight-errants among the Sikhs. They are a class who devote themselves to watch the holy tank at Amritsar, and to defend with their lives the Sikh religion against all invaders; they are dissolute and insolent, but are tolerated by the Government for the sake of their furious courage, which, especially when excited by opium, has on several occasions done good service to their sect.

(i) The name of the tract between the rivers Ravi and Byah, from whence the Sikhs originally sprung, spreading abroad as their arms prevailed. It has frequently happened that one small village, of fifty or a hundred ploughs, has furnished two or three *Sardars*; men who joined the ranks with only a horse and spear, and have in a few years carved out for themselves principalities. Much to their credit these soldiers of fortune have not been ashamed of their origin, but generally retain the name of their native village as an affix to their own name, and as a family mark.

(k) Good judges hold an opinion different from Bellasis; but having more than once narrowly inspected the Sikh guns, horses and harness, and having talked with their artillery officers and privates, my opinion is, that the *Mahradis* artillery was better appointed and more efficient than the Sikh is.

(l) More than one such pony and rider have I seen, out-doing the powers even of the steeds that bore about "heavenly Una" and other damocles errant,

"Whose milk-white palfreys scorned grass,

"Just crop a rose leaf as they pass."

I have seen a little wiry nag thus carry about a heavy man, neither party seeming to know what rest, food, or water meant. The mischief is that a European purchasing one of these gifted animals, finds the spell broken, and his pony wanting all the care that common ponies require. However I know of one officer's pony which, during the late war, carried a pair of heavy boxes, with bedding, and a man sitting on the top, from *Khetat-l-Gijji* to *Mokhoor*, seventy-six miles, in twenty-eight hours, including three for rest; the whole burthen was estimated at four maunds or 320 pounds; the owner of this wonderful pony, in company with the above, and neither of the horses or riders suffered; the animals were of the *Kozak* breed from beyond *Khivá*.

(m) A temple, or literally a station of the Goddess *Debee*. As mentioned in the preface, the history and description of *Kangra* aim at fidelity: it was besieged as here described, and ultimately fell to the Sikhs much in the manner stated by the *Asat* in the fifth chapter.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

CONTENTS.

"The rich man's wealth is his strong-hold.—Some hints on the chase, for the gentlemen of Melton Monbray.—Give up your point if you wish to gain it."

"The Indian prowling for his prey,
Who hears the settlers track his way,
And knows in distant forest far,
Camp his red brethren of the war;
He, when each double and disguise,
To baffle the pursuit he tries,
Low crouching now his head to hide,
Where swampy streams through rushes glide,
Now covering with the withered leaves,
The foot prints which the dew receives."

Rokeby.

I must now return to what had been going on at Court, and will let Chând Khân tell his own story; slightly clipping his letters of its flowers and other redundancies.

"Your Excellency; after the departure of your radiant presence, the light of Lahaur became darkness, the Maharajah opened not his mouth, and the *darbâr* was silent; your enemies, however, insinuated themselves into the royal ear, and soon assailed your well-wishers. The Lord of favor (*a*), however, judged right: the Maharajah is an appreciator of merit, and bade my Lord's detractors be silent. Soon came in reports of the excellent discipline of the march, of the unheard of moderation of the troops, of the regular and orderly manner in which you passed through cities and towns, avoiding crops, or where unavoidably injuring, giving immediate remuneration (*b*); the Maharajah was pleased, and my Lord's enemies hid their faces. Then came the report of the vile attack on my Lord. The Maharajah was enraged, and some of the counsellors could scarcely conceal their chagrin. The Minister and

others (whom my Lord knows) affected it was all a pretence of yours; then came other reports; and it even reached the presence, that Kāngrā would not open its gates. The Maharajah that day (it was the 11th day of the month Safar) suddenly turned to the Rajah and said, "*Rājāji*, it is long since we have visited your *jā-girs* (c) or enjoyed your hospitality; order the train, to-morrow we propose to march that way; no excuses, the season I know is hot, and the distance is great; but by the blessing of Guraji (d), the places are cool, and when reached, will repay the fatigues of the journey. Order General Court, with his own and Khushiyāl Sing's brigade to attend; see that all is ready by the third watch of the night—let the *pesh khāna* proceed immediately." "*Ba chashm*," and the Rajah withdrew:—there was a slight curl on his Highness' mouth, but he did not speak as if disturbed, and immediately proceeded with other business; I kept my place, silent as usual, and soon three or four others followed the Rajah; when he returned, they, too, soon came, after some short delay, and when he had stated that the preparations had all been ordered, he said in his usual soft and winning way: "I am the *Sarkār's* slave, all I have is his, he has raised me from the dust: this journey will cost money; let the servant be permitted to pay the expences, as he is to have the honour of the royal visit; my *jāgir*, and those of my brothers, have been more than usually productive this year: let your servants then offer these nine *lākhs* of rupees as a *peshkash* to the throne;" and as he spoke, *bāngā* after *bāngā* of ducats and of rupees was brought into the presence; it was more than the Maharajah could stand; his eyes literally feasted on the heaps of treasure. "Mishr Benī Rām, eh Mishrji, see the money counted, and that the coin is all of the true sicca:"—"Has your Highness any commands for your excellent servant the faithful Bellasis?" said the Rajah, "for I am dispatching a trusty messenger, desiring him to lose no time in acquainting the presence of his having entered on his important charge"—"Yes, tell him to seek a cool shady spot for our pavilion; not that we now think we shall go just yet in these excessive heats, but lest there should be cause for our moving eastward." The Rajah stepped from the *darbār*, and in an instant a horseman, whose steed had for some minutes stood chafing at the door-way, dashed like lightning across the plain. The riddle needs no reading to my Lord, and I doubt not ere this

reaches, Kāngrā will have been won ; but mind my Lord ; the nine lakhs will be laid at your door : for one day, and one only, the Rajah was your friend ; from that day he disliked you, your appointment increased that dislike, and now you may reckon on his undying hate (e) ; no small matter in truth, but let the knowledge of it induce caution, be always armed and attended, and allow no unknown person with arms in his hands to approach your person. Thy servant will watch the Court, and report ; what more need be said ?”

I liked the style of Chānd Khān's communication, and did not dislike its contents ; it was clear to me I was in a heavy sea, but I feared not the breakers, and indeed never reckoned on court favour without its concomitant court intrigue and minion hatred ; I was therefore well content to proceed on my way, and strange and unaccountable as it might appear, to do my duty to the Sovereign of my election and to the people over whom he had placed me ; the same messenger that had entered the fort, brought the above note ; and trebly content with it, the fort's purposed surrender, and my own virtuous resolve, I threw myself on a *charpai*, and, in a dream of future prosperity, I slept till the morning star appeared ; a few short minutes sufficed for the hasty ablution, and the slight personal decoration that I was used to apply, when I galloped round my lines, visited my picquets, found them alert, and returned to my tent ; I sent for my *Sardārs* and gave orders against any possible treachery. However none was offered, and shortly after sun-rise we were masters of the strongest fort in the Panjāb (f).

No sooner had my troops taken possession of the works, and the different parts had been occupied, than I was curious enough to visit the points on which I had meditated the attack ; my predecessor had been hitherto doing the honours of the fort and still stood by me ; while I, with as much nonchalance as possible, hung over the frightful abysses up which the mountain sheep could scarcely find a footing ; for a time he said nothing, but when I had finished my examination in both directions, he remarked significantly, “ well, *sāhib*, and what do you think ? could the Multānis have managed it, or those stout little Gurkha fellows, so many of whom I see among your ranks ; do you think they could have scaled such a steep in the face of my poor followers ?” “ What does my friend mean ?” observed I, innocently ; “ Ah, the *sāhibs* are wise, very

wise, but the Sikhs have ears too, most excellent sir, and truly had you attempted the escalade, few of your brave troops would have seen their homes again; Kāngrā has many a source of strength that meets not the eye; these loose stones, that form the breastwork, need only to be unloosed to destroy the army of a Sikunder (g); but these failing, you observe we stand on but an outpost that by the pouring down of rocks from above could be crushed, annihilated in an instant; and then where would have been my thousands of brave boys that were behind them, with their sharp ringing jazails (h), their long matchlocks, and their twanging bows? But sooth, noble Colonel, I prefer we should have met as friends; for though the hand of Dandāwar Singh knows what war is in all its forms, his heart has no pleasure in blood, and delights not in slaughter." "Truly," rejoined I; "it would have been an onslaught to have been dreaded, prepared as you seem to have been, and as my friend says, peace at all times is preferable to war; and between servants of the same lord how much the more urgent!" Before evening the gallant old Sikh had moved below with all his garrison; he had been governor for several years, and I felt for his humiliation even in the exultation of my own success.

I now occupied myself day and night in getting acquainted with my people of all degrees; with examining the country, its passes and its fells, its weak and its strong points; and for whole days, leaving my trustiest in charge of the garrison, would I wander over the hills, try every footpath, and investigate the minutest features of my extensive and important charge. My followers were astonished; being accustomed to see all other Sardārs loitering on their *chārpais* from morning until night, or listlessly and half reclining attend to their business, for the first few hours of the day, then sleep; then with all parade and shew, at footpace on horseback, or in a *tanjan* proceed for a mile or two; my never-ceasing bodily and mental activity astonished them; and often would I be asked what was its use? what its end? why I did not enjoy myself? "Get married, *sāhib*" (i), said an old hoary-headed fellow to me one day, "get married and enjoy life." "Yes, but I am a poor man;" "Poor! and why so? why not do as others do? why slave? what's the use? no one will thank you, no one reward; the Maharajah will think you have an evil design, that you perhaps aim at popularity and independence, and the Amils (h) will vilify you for

acting so contrary to themselves. Be moderate at least, the bow too tightly drawn, returns not to its strength; take things easier and you'll last the longer." I laughed and said, "your advice is friendly, by no means bad, but men's natures are different, mine directs me, as that of other men leads them; the result is in the hands of God." My adviser made that peculiar sound, like a "*chuck*!" which indicates surprise or incredulity; and shaking his head replied, "The *sahib* is a wise man in his eccentricity."

Thus did I proceed somewhat irregularly, but always stirring; when not in the field, or actively abroad, I would rise before the dawn, saunter about the works; then shortly after sunrise hold my *darbâr*; which, with a quarter of an hour's interval for breakfast, kept me till midday; my accounts with the *ra'i'yats*, all police matters, were then discussed and settled; at midday I was in the practice of retiring, if indeed it can be called retirement, to withdraw to an apartment without doors; and screened only from the public gaze by *pardahs*; this period of the day I devoted to European literature and keeping up correspondence with the world I had left; at 3 p. m. my principal followers and landholders attended; the latter walking in, making their *salâm*, and taking their places on the outspread carpet, and retiring as they chose, or when especially called, or requiring anything, having a plea to offer, an excuse to make; protection, assistance, remission or other favour to demand; or had the track of a tiger or of a robber to point out; in all such cases, the party would take his seat more near me and we would converse, but in such a tone that any person present could put in his word, and very free of their advice and opinion they were; the system bore with it more familiarity than at first I approved; and as has been the case when I have had a noseless thief on one side of me putting in his word, regarding an investigation going on, on the other side, I have been inclined to affect more of European form; but after all this oriental cool and easiness has its conveniences. An hour before sunset, I was again on foot or on horseback, inspecting my troops, visiting my cultivation, encouraging the *ra'i'yats*, putting in a word at this hut, and an encouraging glance at that field; it was always my object to set an example to my followers, of not injuring the crops, and I was obliged to make some severe examples in the endeavour, but the effect on all was great, and instead of seeing fields and villages deserted as my cortège approached, the inhabitants soon learned to flock about and greet my arrival.

Such was the tenor of my life ; two or three days of the week almost entirely out, and every day once or more in the fields : in this pleasant and useful manner, twelvemonths passed over my head ; when the even tenor of my days was disturbed by two events of more stirring interest.

I had not been long in my eyrie before I received a *parwana* in the *faqir's* hand and cypher, entirely approving of all I had done, encouraging me to a continuance of my present line of action, and promising protection and reward. A week afterwards Aliverdi Khan and his party arrived ; he had kept me acquainted with his movements ; and he now brought in seven of the party who had attacked us ; they were miscreants, the refuse of several of the lower castes, some of them hardly knowing whether they were Musalmán or Hindu ; but all ignorant of any religion, and inured from infancy to deeds of blood and spoliation ; Kanjars, Gajars, and Chamars (!) ; scenes of debauchery and times of tumult were their harvests ; they had been attracted by the preparations for my march, and followed my camp from Lahaur ; with the usual quickness of their craft they were soon masters of the politics of my little army ; and one of them hearing Muhammed Shah hint that a few bold hands only were wanted to perform an easy job and gain a rich reward, a bargain was soon struck, and five hundred rupees promised for putting me out of the way, and half that amount paid down as a retaining fee : the whole party consisted of sixteen men, and four of them being from Kangra neighbourhood, and being well acquainted with the country, they fixed the scene of operations ; the affair was clumsily managed, and they were a cowardly set, or the event might have been otherwise ; our activity in taking up the track was more than they expected, and Aliverdi Khan's untiring zeal in following up his tracker's scent (rendered more than usually keen by the high promises held out) quite floored the chase ; so close indeed were my men several times on them, that the lighted embers of their *chulaks* shewed where their cooking had just been disturbed, and with all their knowledge of the country, they were at last beaten with their own weapons. My men had at the beginning got such clear impressions of their feet, that although every device that ingenuity could suggest was practiced, yet Wáhab Ali and Khairát Ali were too old at their trade to be deceived ; and when no one else of the party could see a symptom of the chase they would be keen on the track. But I must give the Mal-

tân's own account of the chase. "Indeed, *sâhib*, I often thought we were baffled." "What are you after now, you lying scoundrel?" I said in a fit of despondency, to Wâhâb, on one occasion. "What are you following? where are you leading us to?" "Where? see this?" and one very faint clubbed up foot was discernible; "why that's a bear you fool." "Is it Khan? You'll know better soon and place more trust in Wâhâb on our next excursion; that's the bandy legged fellow, he's a lout to take part in such a matter as this, they should have cut his throat and buried him in one of the heaps of leaves; he has betrayed them twice; there are smart fellows among them, but this bandy legged fool thinks that by occasionally making a ball of his foot he can disguise it, but if he trod on his head, Wâhâb would know it by the thickness." "You're a wag my friend," replied I, "and I was wrong, forgive me." "Ah Khan Sahib, your servant is accustomed to such rubs, his life is one of toil and of danger; thankless at all times and only in its excitement offering any compensation; but we'll have these fellows as sure as my old father was the best tracker in the Jalandar Doâb (*m*), unless indeed they put Mr. Clubfoot out of the way, or that chap with the game leg; did you observe that, there?" "What? positively Wahab, you try a man's patience!" "You try mine Khan Sahib; for if at that point the active little fellow, whose feet so seldom appear, did not leap on the back of the *langra wâllâ*, I'll give up all claim to the Colonel Sahib's reward—mind Khan, when we've caught them, to ask the question—observe it was by the clump of bamboos on the high bank of the nullah." Thus did we proceed, Sahib, with a chatter and *chull* at a half walk, half amble; now cautiously feeling our way, now in all the confidence of knowledge pushing boldly forward. The game were masters of their work; indeed as Wahab observed, if they had thrown a couple of their party overboard, they would have got off, scot free; as it was, they tried every trick that ingenuity could devise; in the thick wood they evidently at times proceeded by climbing from branch to branch, again they would in a perfect line draw themselves forward on their bellies; then they would ride on each other's back; they would cross every stream, take the track on the opposite direction, return on their own footsteps and then, sometimes for miles, drop down the stream, and then be off in quite a different quarter. Sometimes Wahab would be puzzled for a whole day; and once actually took us over some brushwood on which lay

nestled our prey, who for days and nights herded with the hog deer of the low hills, and even with their more fitting mates the tigers that skulk about in every dell in those parts. The chase had, as I told the Colonel Sahib, separated into two parties on the first night; but the next morning, they united, separating however again when hard pressed. For the last two days the track was only of seven, and closely pressed they were; they were driven out of the wood, and literally pushed into the town of Nadown. "We have them now" (n), said the trackers, as holding on by our horses' tails they made a circuit of the town and satisfied themselves that the party had entered but had not again left it; leaving a party to watch at each gate, your servant pushed boldly up to the *thannah*, and with all the consequence I could muster, ordered the official to hand over to me the seven murderers that had within the last few hours taken refuge in the town. The *Thannadar* was high, but I was higher. "Good, very good, Singhji, just as you please; but perhaps you are not aware, that he who addresses you, is an Officer high in the service and in the confidence of the excellent and highly favoured Colonel Bellasis, General and Commander in Chief of the Kangra territory; and that these ruffians attempted the *sahib's* life." "That alters the case entirely *Khan Sahib*; why did you not say so at first; for we Singhs are not used to be bearded at our *thannahs*: tell me however quietly what you wish me to do, and I am at your service." "Produce the men I seek; it will be better and pleasanter for both of us that there be no delay, my *chärpāi* is across the Jullā Mukhi Gate, and there it stays till my errand is complete." "The Khan is rough of speech, but my master, Lena Singh, has ordered me to attend to all requisitions of the Colonel you have mentioned; be comforted then, Khanji, if the men are within my walls, be it my responsibility to produce them." "Wisely determined, Kotwālji; I am to be found with my men; send us *rasad* (o), grass, grain and milk; all shall be paid for, as are my orders; but hark ye, friend, to help your researches, here is the measure of their several feet, one, it is this the big sprawl foot, he is lame, very lame of his left leg, and this little chap has a twist in both legs and is preciously bandy besides; all of them must be leg worn, for they've had no rest for a fortnight, and I'll be bound they've had their hearts in their mouths most of the time too; and that does not help to rest a tired man." With this we returned to our party and had scarcely sat down to and commenced our food and

the relation of my interview with the *thannadar*, than the seven culprits pinioned and ironed, bearing misery and famine in their aspect, were made over. With his mouth half full, Wâhâb jumped up ; " yes ! that's him and there's the other ; now tell me old boy, did you not ride on yonder lad's shoulder from the bamboo clump to the big *pipal* ? " but the wretches were in no mood for a joke and affected ignorance of what was said."

Such was the substance of Aliverdi Khan's report ; not much extenuating or exaggerating what he had done ; but shewing pretty plainly that, if he had worked for me, he had also *worked* the Singh, *Kotwalji* pretty well too. In two stiff marches he made Kote Kângrâ, and the appearance of himself, party, and prisoners, shewed that little grass had grown under their feet since we parted. A more villainous looking set than those brought before me, I have seldom seen, they at first denied the matter in *toto*, and got up a plausible enough story in defence, but a little gentle threatening and the very conclusive evidence against them, induced them to confess. One, a Bhourya, was a very intelligent ruffian, and seemed to have enjoyed the sport ; his adventures I may some day lay before the public, but I must cut short the case, briefly stating that Nand Singh's, Muhammed Shah's and the old Sikh's participation in the plot, was proved fully : the latter of course denied everything, but when I caused a *pardah* to be drawn up and shewed him his horse, whose death, by a fit of gripes, he and his worthy commander had certified, he was so taken back that with outstretched hands, he craved my pardon, " I have nothing to say my lord, your slave was misled, he was taught to believe you a tyrant and a monster, he has found you neither ; it was my fate, do with me as seemeth best." Nand Singh refused to plead, simply saying, I was pleased to desire his ruin and might work my will ; but when he saw his confidant Muhammed Shah attempting to vindicate himself at his expence, there was a slight quiver of the lip, but it passed, and his usual bold and insolent bearing returned ; indeed to have seen him, a stranger would have little supposed him on trial for his life, but rather the indignant plaintiff in a case affecting his honor ; in this he had his end to serve, and before the court broke up, there were many loud and undisguised appeals for justice from the soldiery that crowded around. The man was a Sikh, and the majority of the lancers were so too ; he was virtually their commanding officer and had brothers and connexions among them : my position therefore

was delicate : I hesitated for a few moments, but resolved that come what would, his life should pay the forfeit ; I, therefore, sentenced the nine inferior villains to be branded on the left shoulder with the word " Ruffian," to receive each two hundred lashes on his bare backside, and then to work in irons as a felon for the term of his natural life. This sentence was promulgated, a scaffold and nine posts ordered to be erected on the public parade ; arrangements were all made to put down at once any outbreak ; it was done quietly and without any unusual stir, I appeared with my usual attendants at the hour appointed ; the branding and flogging over, I ordered Nand Singh to the front, he was pale, the blood had forsaken his face, leaving a greenish hue over his countenance ; but there was still no quailing, rather indeed a fiercer, wilder aspect than usual ; the effect of opium with which he was largely drugged ; I stood with him close in front of his Regiment, I explained the enormity, the unmanliness of the act he had attempted ; I offered a full pardon, on the one condition that he should give up his Principal, and place in my hands the full means of convicting him, his eye glistened with a demoniac fire—" never dog, cursed, unclean, filthy Kaffer—you have escaped me, but your web is spun—do your pleasure on my body, your own shall soon be rotting on your bones !" He would have proceeded, but I ordered the executioner to cut off his right hand at the wrist. He bore the amputation like a hero, no sign of pain, or cry of mercy escaped him : he looked around as if expecting some event, his eye caught mine and faltered, and, at that moment, a carbine ball struck me on the left shoulder ; the marksman was on the instant dragged from the ranks, and would have been then and there cut to pieces, but I stayed the swords of the slayers, and faint as I felt, I upheld myself, saw that the man was a brother of Nand Singh's, and ordered his instant discharge without injury ; he thanked me ironically, but saluting me as he passed, said slowly, " Kaffer, we'll meet again." I was fast sinking, people and things floated before me, I had just sense and strength remaining to tell the troops, that I had not originally intended to have executed the capital sentence without their full acquiescence, and that but for the murmurs and speeches of the previous day, the present scene should not have been enacted : " but you know my friends, there cannot be two masters, more than two sups, if I am not to be obeyed, I had better yield up my

command at once to the miscreant before you ; his own words have now evinced his guilt, if there was doubt before, now there can be none. Did I choose to exercise my authority, I have ample means of enforcing it, but I purpose otherwise—the matter is now in your hands ; you have a choice of commanders, a few minutes and my unbandaged wound will end my career, Nand Singh's circumstances are much the same ; choose between us ; run him up the block before you, or see me finish my career,"—saying thus, my knees shook, I fell to the ground, and my senses fled.

NOTES.

(a) This translation does not sound nearly so euphonious as the original "*Khudāwād-i-nāmat*" which is a favourite oriental hyperbole for addressing a superior, as is Chānd Khan's second phrase, "appreciator of merit" or "*khādarān*"

(b) A practice almost entirely peculiar to the British in India, and hardly credible to the Natives, who are accustomed to look on any encampment, from that of an army, to that of an individual, as a scourge of greater or less violence ; to be endured, like a flight of locusts or an earthquake.

(c) A rent-free tenure, on terms of military service, the holder having to furnish a specified quota of troops, when required, or for regular service : *jagirs* differ in this respect from religious endowments, which are granted for the support of a holy man or family, or the repairs of a tomb.

(d) The spiritual founder of the Sikhs, mentioned in the preceding chapter as Nānāc Shāh, or Guru Nānāc ; Shāh means Saint as well as King ; and Guru may be translated Priest, and *jī* signifies *Sir*, or rather, the French *Monsieur*, and is applied in addition to any other title ; "*Monsieur L'Evêque*" is perhaps the truest fettering of Guruji for European ears.

(e) The reader will please to remember, in this and other passages, who is the speaker. Raja Dhyā Singh might possibly have disliked a man without instigating, or even desiring his assassination, though Chānd Khān makes him do both. A great man is not necessarily party to all the deeds and thoughts, into which a rude villain may drag his name. The Quarterly Reviewer, who makes John Knox cognizant of, and consenting to the murder of Darnley, because the perpetrators of that deed, inserted the reformer's name in a list they furnished to an English Privy Counsellor, would have made a capital Judge in a tribunal for the resumption of rent-free tenures, where the claims of the legal evidence is often exactly in proportion to the moral proofs, the opposite way.

(f) Strictly speaking Kāngrā is not in the Panjāb ; that term only applying to the tract included between the rivers Jelum, Chenab, Ravi, Byah and Sutluj, which constitute the Panj-āb or five waters.

(g) Alexander the Great, under the name of Sikandar or Sikandar Beg, is familiarly known all over the East. He and Rūstām are the heroes or rather demigods of Western Asia.

(h) A wall piece or swivel mounted on a tripod ; it is used in the field ; a gun of nearly the same size and construction, mounted on a camel's back, is called a Zamburak.

(i) This foregoing passage is a pretty fair picture of eastern officials, and their usual spirit ; working for working's sake, or to fulfil a duty, is out of their

range of ideas. The acquisition of wealth and power, is the object of exertion, and when the end is gained, why continue the labour? Business can be done by menials, and the profits still reach the chief, directly or indirectly, either by participation, or by a well-applied squeeze to the deputy when full of the gains of iniquity. Of course I speak generally, there are exceptions, and among them was the very person who made me the speech here recorded, some ten years ago; this was Hakim Mehndi Ali Khān, the late Vazir of Oude; even to old age he was active in mind and body, would take long rides in the morning, and attend minutely to his business during the day. He was a clear-seeing and able old man, not untainted by the corruption around him, but answering to the idea of a good oriental despot, reckless what road he took to obtain power, but, when obtained, using it justly and energetically.

(4) Abbreviation of Amāldār and meaning a ruler, usually an intendant of finance; among the natives he is the civil chief of a district or province, sometimes armed with military authority, sometimes not; such rulers are often called Dewān, or Nāzim.

(5) "*Kanjars*, and *Kanchan*" are names equally applied to a tribe of Gypsies, who wander about India, pursuing their usual calling of thieves, beggars, and jugglers: they rather purchase and steal female children for a profligate life, than sacrifice their own women to it. *Gujars* are noted cattle stealers; *Chumars* are, properly speaking, leather-dressers, a low caste, ready to turn their hand to any thing that promises gain.

(6) *Doāb* means *two waters*, and is a term applied to indicate various provinces, included between two streams. The Jalandar Doāb lies between the rivers Rāvi and Byah.

(7) This termination of the pursuit is taken from a real tracking-excursion, in which the robbers were thus traced into a town, and the leader of the pursuit told the head man of the place that he had tracked the footsteps into the walls, but could find no track out again; that his *chārpāi* was across the gate, and there it should remain till the culprits were given up. Given up they were, after a decent delay, and they then made no attempt to deny their offence. When reminded that one horse had always been in the rear, and asked how this had happened, they replied, "Oh! he was lame, and could not keep up with the others," thus verifying the trackers' observations.

(8) Literally, *the thing brought, or rations*. Throughout India, the government servants expect free quarters, and if refused, owe a grudge to the stout zamindar. Grass and wood, especially, are expected gratis; and, even if the superior pay for them, little, if any, of the price ever reaches the rightful owner. Englishmen, however, generally act otherwise, and I may here give an instance of the estimate in which they are held. A Jew of Meshid was lately applied to by a European, who professed to be an Englishman, travelling with despatches to Tehrān, and who asked for an advance of 500 ducats. The Jew gave the money, simply on the stranger's note of hand. It turned out that the rogue was a Prussian, in the Russian service, who had, however, so much honesty as to write to the English *Chargé d'Affaires* at Tehrān, requesting that he would honor the bill, for the credit of his country. The Jew, being asked how he came to give the money to an unaccredited stranger, who could give no proof even that he was an Englishman, replied, "I believed he was what he said, because he would not accept any presents or gratuitous supplies."

CHAPTER FIFTH.

CONTENTS.

"Shewing how, while one wound is healing, another may be received.—"An ower true tale."—"Many are Poets, who have never penned their inspiration," and an old woman may talk blank verse.—Bellasis applies the sweetner and cement of civilized life and finds it intelligible even to the Sikhs."

"My beauteous bird will leave her bower,
To build her nest in yonder tower,
And if the walls be dark and rude,
My love shall soothe her solitude.
Her husband's fame shall be her gem,
Her husband's praise her diadem,
Her husband's heart shall be her throne,
Her music be her husband's tone."

Unpublished Poem.

"Oh beauty is the master charm.
The cyren of the soul,
Whose magic zone encompasseseth,
Creation with controul,
The foster flame of every mind,
And love and light, and human kind."

Robert Montgomery.

"O'er her slaughtered warrior's bier,
The lady dropped nor flower nor tear,
Vengeance deep brooding o'er the slain,
Had locked the source of softer woe,
And burning pride and high disdain,
Forbad the rising tear to flow."

Lay of the last Minstrel.

How long my insensibility lasted I cannot say, but by the growth of my nails and hair some days must have elapsed, when, towards mid-day, I awoke as from a troubled sleep, confused visions, and

racking fancies perplexed my brain. I could not bring to my recollection where I was, and the confusion of my thoughts was the more aggravated by the gentle sounds and female hands that seemed ministering around my pillow ; I fancied myself again in my own native valley, the turfy plain was before me, and on it were mixed in mortal fray, the people of every land that I had visited in my travels, matchlocks were flashing, and bows were twanging around me ; arrows passed through my brain, and showers of sword strokes seemed pouring on my head. I fled towards the bright rapid river, on whose banks I had so often played in my boyhood, and unable to escape my pursuers, had just gained the bank, when a magic power gently raised me from the earth, and in one bound landed me safely in the thick wood on the other side : I awoke with a start, thick drops of perspiration were on my brow, my tongue was parched, and feebly I called for water ; a female glided from my side, and my faithful *Pesh khidmat* quickly placed to my lips a cup of sherbet. Refreshed, I asked where I was, what was the matter and who were those around me ; " hush my master " was the reply, " you have been very ill, but by *Allah's* blessing the danger is over, none but friends and well-wishers are near, trust your servant and be still." I could not but obey, for my strength was already exhausted, and once more I sunk, for some hours, into a dreamy insensibility, but when, towards evening, I again awakened, it was with a fresher feeling and inhaling the sweet breeze from the mountains. I felt a different person, and seating myself on my cot, propped up by my pillows, I saw a child trip up to my side, who, by the joyous glances of her heavenly face, shewed the delight my recovery gave her. Her age was twelve, or perhaps less, her stature and proportions small, her countenance was in no feature handsome, being broad and of the Tartar stamp ; but her forehead was of noble dimensions, and there was a bright kindling fire in her deep set eyes, that told of a heart of nature's own best stamp. Fearlessly and without affectation, she took my thin hand worn to a shadow, and gently putting it to her lips, touched them again with her own forefinger and enjoined silence ; I was satisfied to gaze, for she brought to my mind gone-by days, and a loved sister who had thus sat by my couch side and thus watched me, " My mother will be here directly *sāhib*, and how glad she'll be to see you thus," Again she touched her lips and prevented reply, and at the moment a middle-aged dame entered the apartment with a cup of *charaita* in her hand ; in silence she put it to

mylips ; I drank, and the pleasant bitter much revived me. " My lord is better, blessed be *Bhagwân* for the change, but rest and quiet are still needed : the *sâhib's* curiosity is excited, and on terms of silence it shall be partly gratified forthwith ; and three days hence we will answer all questions." I muttered acquiescence, and the dame seating herself at ease on the carpet by the side of my couch, and the child sidling up closely to me, and playing with my neglected hair, while my attendant seated himself at a respectful distance, the old lady thus commenced,

" Our story in its broader features is in this blighted land no unusual one ; we are of the stock of Kāngrā, the tendril by your side is the daughter of Anradh Chand (a), and the withered being before you was his wife. My lord is a wise man, all Kohistan echoes with the praises of his justice and of his wisdom. He cannot then be ignorant how Kāngrā fell to the Sikh, how indeed the Princes of the whole chain from the Sutluj to the Attak were absorbed by the grasping Ranjit, and his more grinding Lieutenants ; our houses ill bore the yoke, but when last year this sole blossom of our blighted tree was demanded by the upstart Dhyân Singh, and granted by his robber Master, no hope remained, and our only refuge was in flight : we attempted to gain the British frontier ; but, so sudden was the design, that we were unable to make the necessary preparations and to take a sufficient escort, another day, would have ensured our safety, when we were attacked by a strong body of horsemen ; my husband was slain or captured, our few stout followers slaughtered, my daughter was torn from my arms, and I was told I might now take my way. Broken-hearted I returned to Kāngrā ; and it was only two months since that this excellent woman restored to me my child ; blessings on the heads of both." I turned to the farther corner of the room, and, for the first time, beheld another female, aged and wrinkled, attired in other fashion than the mother and daughter before me, and of another caste and stamp entirely ; " why she is a *Kanehani* surely," I exclaimed. " My lord is partly right, but he must not speak, and a weak woman need not to tell a wise man that worth is to be found in every grade, and under every garb, as infamy is surely so ; but come forward, Gulâbi, and tell the *sâhib* how you came here, and how our acquaintance commenced" ! Thus invited, the woman came forward, interesting even in her old age and bearing the traces of

former beauty : placing her hand to her head, she moved up a little in rear of the Râni, and seating herself, began her tale in a half-chant, half-mutter.

"The Râjâ of Kângrâ protected the poor Kanjar ; it was the matchlock of Sansâr Chand that saved our boy from the tree and for a time preserved him to us, but he died ; not however unavenged" and the Harridan made me start again by the force with which she struck the ground ; " Yes ! " she resumed, " curses on the Sikhs, on them and theirs, cowards and robbers, they know no law but that of might, and they hang up the innocent on the pretence of having done the very acts they are themselves hourly committing. But it is of myself you ask, not them ; my story is however too long for the *sâhib* now to hear, when he is well, if he still so desires, it shall be told ; but what can the misery of a wretch like me be to a noble like him ? Yet I am not still unhappy, for I have saved this flower, and have half redeemed my debt to the princely house of Kângrâ ; suffice it now to take up the Râni's story. During the catastrophe she has mentioned, I was gathering simples along the skirts of the low hills ; for, having long since abandoned the customs and practices of what may be now called my tribe, I eked out a maintenance by conducting to the welfare, as formerly I had done to the vices of the community. While thus employed, a party of Sikhs, fresh from a late foray, overtook me ; one of them bore in his arms the fainting body of this sweet girl ; the man had known me in different times, he was then a dissolute Mussalmân ; I a loose, though unwilling *Kanchani* ; he was tired of his burthen and the party undecided as to its disposal ; in my presence the proposition was made and agreed to, of throwing it into a deep *kud*. A glance at the pale features of their victim told me enough ; but I expressed no interest in her fate, rather offering to assist ; just, however, as her last moment seemed to have arrived, I said, as if unconcernedly, " the girl is not ill-looking ; you shall have fifty rupees and these bangles for her," shewing them at the same time a pair worth forty rupees. Their avarice was excited, " ay," says one, (a dwarfish villain whose long locks covered his loss of ears,) with a grin, " our master would rejoice to see the damsel a *Kanchani* ; the proud scion of Kângrâ would natch to a new tune—aye take her old lady, and give us the rupees ; " I satisfied the wretches that they should get the money, and relieved

them of their lovely charge ; Such was the rude treatment she had received, that life was with difficulty restored ; fearful lest enquiry should be made and the child be again torn away, I concealed her until such time as I could with safety restore her to her family, and have been thrice blessed in thus requiting the favor they shewed to my own lost child. For seven days have we now watched by your pillow, it was the report of my little skill in the healing art that induced your servants to call me in ; you were in a high fever and the dressings applied to your wound had irritated rather than allayed the inflammation ; I removed the bandages, applied soothing simples, and, praised be him who careth equally for the Sikh, the Hindu, the Moslem, the *Farangî* and the outcast *Kanjar*, that my exertions have availed." " And shall be rewarded good mother, but tell me more of yourself," I added, " for you have interested me much." " Not now *sâhib*, another time if you will, but at present excitement would be dangerous." " One question more however let me ask, what happy chance brought the Rânî and her lovely child to my dwelling ?" " The little service I had done, had earned me a nook in her abode, *sâhib*, from whence I was sent for, to attend you ; the Rânî who knew you by character, and had even on one occasion seen you, was interested by your condition, and soon to anxious enquiries joined her personal assistance, until, for the last three days, mother and daughter have scarce left your pillow, and have watched you as a son or brother."

I will not trouble my readers with a lengthened detail of my sufferings, or of my slow recovery, suffice it to say, that the ball is still in my shoulder, and that, from the awkward attempts at removing it, much of my sufferings arose, but what commenced in misfortune tended more to my subsequent, though brief happiness than it did to temporary ill. Not the least grateful occurrence of this time was the interest excited in my fate among my soldiers, and even more so among my husbandmen and traders ; my doorways were thronged with visitors, immediately the rumour was about of my restored sensibility ; and, for days, men of all classes pressed around my cot, each more anxious than the other to express his good wishes ; some, doubtless, were time servers, but many, I trust, spoke from their hearts. Chiefly were my Multânîs delighted at the prospect of my recovery, and from them and others I soon heard how unanimously the sentence

passed on Nand Singh had been executed; and how the very Sikhs in the Regiment had lent a hand in enforcing justice. My illness and convalescence gave me time and opportunity to examine my own position, and the general feeling as regarded myself and the Government I served: it was not concealed from me, that my position was dangerous; that by taking the life of a Khālsā Sikh, I had deeply offended the nation, that by capitally punishing an offender, without reference to the Court, I had been supposed to aim at independence, and that my very popularity at Kāngrā was a crime worse than all. Many were the sifting questions put to me, to draw out my intentions, much the honest advice given, and more the treacherous counsel poured into my ear, but I listened to all and replied with civil nothings, or said what was the strict truth, that "my pleasure was the will of the *darbār*, as its servant I should obey all lawful orders, and should such misfortune fall on me, that I should be required to act against the right, I should so far bow to my fate, that, turning my horse's head towards a more friendly land, I should with regret bid adieu to His Highness's territory."

In two months I had recovered my strength, and during much of this time the three females tended me as if I had been their own, the old lady was kindness itself, while the gentle child wound round my heart to such a degree, that I was scarce easy in her absence; and I delighted to find that my presence was as grateful to her. Child as she was, uneducated and Hindu, there was in her a fountain of truth and of common sense, of tenderness and sensibility that daily more endeared her to me; as a Rajpūtāl and hill woman she had been kept in little of the restraint that usually falls to the lot of oriental females, contaminated by Moslem customs; and considering me irrecoverably ill, and therefore, rather a creature of another world than this, neither she, her mother, nor the old *Kan-chani* had stood on any ceremony, and my suddenly awakening while surrounded by my nurses prevented our undergoing the usual formalities, or their more ceremoniously entering my chamber.

Gulāhi was gifted with a great fund of right feeling and sound sense that had carried her little scathed through the scenes of vice in which her youth had been spent; It was one evening during my recovery, that she thus addressed me, "Sāhib, praised be the Great Benefactor of all! your honor's strength has now increased, and your *laundi* will tell her tale if it is still desired." "By all

means, mother," I replied, "I am all anxiety;" She forthwith began her narrative seating herself at ease on the carpet, and folding her arms, with downcast head, keeping up a gentle swing of the body, as if in cadence with her song, for it was a rapid rhapsody, in the most flowery gypsy dialect, rather than a sober detail of facts. Her meaning only, I profess to give, as indeed I do in all the narratives or speeches of my native acquaintances; but without further preface we will enter in Gulābi's tale.

"The wretchedness of a *hanchani's* life my lord cannot understand; my tale shall therefore consist of facts rather than of feelings, I was a child, much of the age of this sweet girl, when I was stolen from my parents: all I can remember is, that my father was a man of some consideration, the head of a village, or the *siāna* of a *tap-pā*: the time of my birth is marked by that troubled period, when the whole hill region was excited by the unnatural rebellion of Brij Rāj against his father Ranjīt Deo; the Deo Rajah, bringing into our mountains on one side or other, as friends or as foes, the squadrons of the different Sikh Misals. The Chiefs of Chamba, Nurpūr, Kāngrā, and Basaihar aided their brother Rajah, and unwisely they let into the confederacy, the leaders of the Dhani Misal, thus opening to the wily enemy, as friends, the fastnesses of our country, and shewing them the road, when they should find it convenient to meet us as foes; Churut Singh, the grandfather of Ranjīt Singh, the present Ruler, was the chief supporter of the rebellious Brij Rāj; he (Churut Singh) was a wary prudent soldier, and might have effected his nefarious designs, had not his career been cut short by the bursting of his matchlock. The day that he died I have heard was the day of my birth, and even now do I recollect the first joyous days of my childhood, when bounding over the crags, or gathering wild flowers on the mountain sides, I gained that strength of constitution, and that knowledge of plants that has since stood me in such stead; one sister and one brother were my playmates, the former was younger, and the latter four years older than myself—what may have been my sister's, my father's, mother's fate I know not; my noble brother fell, as brother should, in resisting the ravishers of his sister.

The party that carried me off, had been sent by the villain, Jai Singh Banghi, on the accursed errand of murdering parents, to steal their children for purposes of prostitution; it is needless to wound the feelings of my lord, or to rack my own soul with a detail

of what I suffered ; neither my youth, nor my innocence could save me, neither my tears, nor my threats could turn the ruthless savage from his purpose ; more than once I attempted self-destruction, but I was watched, and food was forced down my throat, and finally I became the ruined thing you see me. Yes, before womanhood had fairly grown upon me, I was a withered, hopeless, broken-hearted creature, ashamed to return to my father's house, even should I succeed in evading the watchfulness of my keepers, and soon disregarded even by my despoiler, and thrown aside for another and a later victim. Short, however, was the interval of comparative happiness, of quiet and solitariness that I enjoyed, when I was, as a worn-out garment, parted with to an old *kanchani*, as payment for the services of her squad at a festival. I was now virtually the slave of a devil (b) ; of one who, tho' of my own sex, was dead to the slightest feeling of right, who would have sold her own daughter to prostitution, or given the child of her bosom, if possible, to a worse fate. The life I led with her for twelve years, you may imagine ; I *nâched* before *Sardârs* ; attired in silken vestments and sparkling with jewels, the *envied* of all beholders ; I danced before Ranjit Singh himself, and before his father Maha Singh ; but while smiles were on my brow, and laughter on my lips, my very heart was breaking, and I was exerting myself in the hope that life's cord would snap, and I should end my days in their presence. *Kanchanis* and *nâch* girls disgrace not the dwelling of my lord ; but he is doubtless aware of the scenes that daily and nightly occur at *Lâhaur* ; how he, whom they call Maharajah, doses wretched girls, worn-out women, and mere infants with the strongest liquors, indeed with liquid fire, and then sets them to squabble ; how all decency is banished from the presence, all shame is mocked at. Even now I blush to say how often I have taken part in such scenes, how, intoxicated with *bhâng*, or with liquor, I have been most riotous of the roystering crew, so much so that I became a favourite, and had a *jâgir* assigned me ; I might even have turned the tables on my mistress, but no time or habitude could reconcile me to my position, and though the drunken *Gulâbi* was favourite of the *darbâr*, the same *Gulâbi* was a dull lifeless creature when in her senses ; and was soon more than ever trampled on as a sullen dangerous inmate. My value thus lowered, my treatment became, if possible, worse ; the shoe was daily applied to my mouth (c), and had they supposed that I could have endured heavier weapons, such would have been applied ;

as it was, the nights that were not passed in debauchery were occupied in grinding grain for the other inmates of the brothel, or in plaiting the hair of a younger or more favoured *kanizah*; sleep was thought unnecessary to me, and often, after having during the long weary night turned my coarse stone, I have been dragged off my wretched *chârpâi* to make way for another, or to tend, dress or adorn one of my companions, or to louse my fat mistress while she dozed away the day. Such a life could not long last: how my frame sustained it for such a term of years I can scarce understand, at length the long looked for opportunity occurred, and I fled across the Suteluj, and for several years remained concealed at Ludiâna; for a time and by stealth I was obliged to follow the practices of my adopted tribe to prevent starvation; but my loathing was not the less that such should be my calling. It was during this time that I purchased, with one of the ornaments I had carried off with me, a young boy from a strolling party, who had evidently stolen him for the Lahaur market; the lad grew and gained on me, and was to me as a son, more loving than a hundred natural born children; he was to me as my breath, the one thing that loved me—that I loved—the one being that knew me and knew not of my shame; he called me mother and believed me to be so, and clung to me with a girlish fondness, but he was a bold and a fearless lad, and whenever I would let him from my sight, he would be running errands for the police peons, riding the *sawârs'* horses to water, and making himself so useful that Prabhu was soon a well-known character, was trusted to clean the soldiers' arms, and could, as a boy, ride the most unruly horse, so that a fair opening offered for service with the British. But, outcast as I was, and estranged as I had become to my own land, my heart still yearned after my native hills; and feeling now that time had done its work upon me, that little of my former attractions remained, and that I ran no danger of detection, I determined to endeavour to seek my long lost home; but the same five-and-twenty years that had passed over my head, had caused its changes in the whole range of hills; so that with years of care, of toil, of searching and of peril, I could trace nothing of my father's fate, and gain no clue to the scite of my birth-place. While wandering on the hilly country, chance threw us on a party of the Kangra Rajah's troops then returning from a foray; my Prabhu urged me to allow him to join their

ranks and I consented; within a month he was taken prisoner in repelling an *inroad* of the Sikhs (*d*), and to frighten others from the Kāngrā ranks, my son with others was tied up to trees to be used as marks by their coward captors. Disguised in male attire as a *faqir*, I had followed their course, and soon as I learnt the dreadful intention, I flew to Kāngrā, I painted to the chief the disgrace it would bring on his name, if he allowed to be sacrificed those who had ventured their lives in his cause. A mother's tears prevailed, dangerous as was the service, the Rajah himself, with a chosen band, took the field, and by a long and rapid march came up after the slaughter had commenced, but still in time to save my boy; the cowardly butchers fled, leaving some twenty dead on the field, for thoughtless of danger, and unconscious of the vicinity of an enemy, the Sikhs were taken completely by surprise. Time passed, and, as you are aware, the Rajah of Kāngrā became but as a cipher in his own hall, his troops were hardly his own, and his best and most faithful followers were daily dismissed or cut off on one pretence or another; on a false accusation of adultery, as false as his own false heart, the villain Gulāb Singh had my son seized (*e*), and ordered that he should be thrown from the top of a high tower; that I live to tell the tale is to myself wonderful—yes, I will live until my hands are dyed in the blood of the cold-blooded, false-hearted miscreant. Prabha was a powerful man, a giant in strength, he was the hero and the pride of Kāngrā; it was, therefore, difficult to find executioners, the deed was however done, my boy was thrown over the battlement, but his struggles were such, that he did not clear the balustrade to which he clung and finally succeeded in ensconcing himself on it; his assassins feared to approach him lest he should drag them with himself to destruction; they endeavoured to entice him up, but until they went to Gulāb Singh and returned with an assurance of full pardon, he stirred not, he spoke not; when the signet was however shewn and a solemn pledge of safety given, he clambered again to the fatal roof, and before his footing was recovered, the monsters fell on him, and thus buried him far over the parapet and clear of all impediments. Life was at once extinct, in place of my beautiful, my manly boy, I picked up a mass of livid flesh, and could scarce recognise the corpse of my child."

This last portion of Gulāb's story was scarcely breathed out,

while with clenched hand, distended nostrils and veins, and eyes pouring out very fire, the bereaved woman called down curses on those who had again darkened her lone house; who had put out the one solitary lamp that cheered her quite desolate condition—"Yes, his day shall come, when his own son shall fall and their day will come, cowards and traitors have they ever been; they have risen on the ruin, the murder of all that was noble around them; where have they ever shewn manhood? no, it was ever by fraud, by falsehood, by sowing dissension, by setting son against father or bribing the servant to betray his master; it was thus and not in the fair field that they have gained the mastery; the Mughuls hunted them as foxes; the Afghans drove them as sheep before them; Nadir Shâh and his Persians heeded them not, and the very Mahrâthâs, in the first rise of their fortune and pride of their infancy, passed through their hordes as a whirlwind. The *farangi* Jāj Thomas, when he held Hânsī, said he could seize the Panjāb with two thousand men; and so he could, and so will some brave man yet, and my old eyes will yet see their temples defiled and their tanks sprinkled with the blood of their own accursed sect; did I not live in such a hope, this day would end the career of Gulābi. But let me end my tale while sense yet remains to do so, for it is not always that my strength can bear such opening of my wounds. I was permitted to remove the corpse, I burned it, and fled far from Kāngrā; wandered I knew not whither, nor do I know now how long, but years have elapsed, moons and moons have rolled over me; the dew of night has wet my head, and the hot sun of day has scorched me; nightly have I watched star after star arise, gain their utmost height, and sink again towards the west; seldom indeed have my eyes closed until the morning appeared, and the blush of dawn has often gilded my *chārpāl* before I had laid myself on it. And all these long wakeful hours, one thought, one hope was on my soul—vengeance! My subsistence was gained by gathering herbs, and, as want urged me, carrying them to the nearest *bazars* for sale; it was while thus employed, the opportunity occurred of saving the Rani's lovely daughter—the one bright spot in my long life of misery."

She ceased, and with outstretched arms and clenched hands the forlorn creature threw herself on the ground with her bare forehead on the earth, and thus remained for several minutes in silence.

for I could not break the sanctity of her grief, nor did I attempt by words to effect impossibilities, but I let nature have its way; gradually recovering, the poor woman resumed her position, and seeing by my looks how much I commiserated her, she bowed in grateful silence and withdrew.

Many a tale of herself and others did the old woman tell me, and much light did she throw on my mind in regard to the dreadful crime of child-stealing, so common in all the hilly tracts of the East, which are made to furnish regular supplies, not only for the *zanānahs* of grantees, but for the brothels of the plains.

Chanda Kanwar, the old Rani too, wiled away many an otherwise weary hour with tales of the former grandeur of her house, with legends of Kāngrā and narrations of the feuds of the Chauhāns and Rathore (f), of Moslem wiles and of Sikh treachery, the last as being freshest in memory was most bitterly dealt out, and triumphantly did the old lady exclaim, "Yes! never by force or by fair fighting could the dogs have found entrance; did we not after a twelve month's siege, drive Akbar, the Great Emperor of Dehli, from before our mountain fastness, did not the Gurkhās, bold as lions, in vain seek an entrance, and fruitlessly, by famine as by sword, endeavour to induce surrender? But the arts and the gold of the Sikh prevailed; he plunders one to bribe another, and employs the victim of yesterday to decoy or destroy others and others; thus has his tide swelled until the Panjāb has no longer bounds for his pride and ambition, it remains to see what game he'll play with the *farangī*, but though it swept with it me and mine, and destroyed the last relics of Kāngrā, my heart would welcome the flood of foreigners that should sweep root and branch of the accursed Sikhs from the earth."

In such like conversation, with occasionally a song from Gulābī or from the sweet lips of Māhtāb, my bed of sickness was cheered; and even when my strength was so far renewed, as to allow of my leaving it, the difficulties of my position, and the great accumulation of arrears of business could hardly draw me from the magic circle of my *zanānah*; daily, however, reports came in and rumours thickened that told me it was time to be up and stirring.

Two months had elapsed from the day of the catastrophe, when I ordered a parade of all my troops, and going down the ranks on a gently ambling ghooat, my heart glowed at the loud shouts of

welcome that greeted me, and the satisfaction, nay delight, that appeared in the eyes of my men, the few even who would have drunk my blood deemed it prudent to put on holiday faces;—I knew them however and was not deceived.

On the turfy sward, I had that evening laid out a feast for those who were present at the morning's parade; and the rich *kababs* and *pulāos*, and cloying sweetmeats, supplied in profusion, did not satisfy the soldiery less than did my warm thanks and grateful praises of the morning; with their bellies full they were all heroes, each was ready to lay down his life for me and every man of them would follow me to Roum; nay beyond the *kālā-pāni*. Your metal may be tried yet. my men, mused I, and then I contemplated as I gazed on the rough rude creatures, on their generally spare sinewy form, reflected by the bright moonlight in all degrees of relief, how many of them were really my friends; how many, in an hour of need, would place his body between mine and the impending blow; and then my musings took a more general turn, on the extraordinary engine of mercenary army; by what magic influence it is kept together; how small a spark has destroyed the fabric of years, how little is required to soothe and to gratify rude minds, and how little to rouse and irritate them. And then I wondered if the English ever cast these ideas in their minds, and if it ever occurs to them, that an injudicious or tyrannical officer at the head of their troops, or civil relations, is worse than useless, he is a firebrand and in a day may destroy their whole goodly fabric—to pension such a one, to reward him for making himself scarce would be great gain. In such cogitations I sauntered between the ranks of feeders, until my tired limbs told me it was time to move, and the noisy symptoms of repletion warned me that the feast was over.

NOTES.

(a) The story of Kāngrā may not be uninteresting, as a sample of the Sikh policy in the hills.

Sansār Chand, the Kāngrā Rājā, was besieged by the Gūrkhās in A. D. 1809, and in his difficulty solicited Sikh assistance; Ranjit Singh with his troops, arrived before the mountain fastness, where the Gūrkhās had taken up their position; but Sansār Chand now shrank from admitting so unsafe an ally as the Mahārājāh into his citadel: his son, however, Ugrōdh Chand was in the hands of Ranjit, who depending on the apprehension he thus inspired made a bold rush at the gate, obtained an entrance, and immediately substituted a garrison of his own, for that of Sansār Chand.

Ranjit left the chief, the civil possession of his own territory, exacting however, a fixed tribute. On the death of Sansār Chand, Unrōdh Chand succeeded, and held back from paying the *nazarānā*, demanded by Ranjit : eventually he yielded and paid a lac of rupees. Three years after on his two sisters being demanded in marriage for relatives of Dhyan Singh's, Unrōdh Chand fled across the Suteluj, abandoning his territory to the mercy of the Sikhs who lost no time in seizing so valuable a possession. Kāngrā has ever since formed an integral part of the Sikh dominions. Another trait illustrative of the Sikh policy, I borrow from the Journal of Lieutenant A. Cunningham, given in No. CX. Asiatic Society Journal :

" On the top of the pass I saw a gibbet with two cages, containing the skull of Thams and his nephew, the chiefs of Poonch, who had for a long time resisted the encroachments of the Jammu family. A price was set upon their heads by Gulāb Singh, but, from their known bravery no one dared attack them openly ; and they were at last killed, while asleep, and their heads carried to Gulāb Singh, who ordered them to be suspended from the Bheembār pass "

(B) Prostitution in the east does not entail all the horrors and evils that it does in England, the system is somewhat like that in France, a recognized and licensed portion of the state ; poverty and disease, therefore do not prevail to so fearful an extent as in London. But terrible, still, are the tales disclosed by the wretched beings devoted to this odious purpose, and a new feature in it has of late years been discovered in the trade of *suglanness*. Major Sleeman's report on this subject shews a regularly organized system for the murder of parents, that the children may be procured for the most degrading purposes ; and Major Crawford's notes on oriental slavery, disclose a "mystery of iniquity" on the same head. The victims in whatever way obtained, are educated for their vocation, their entire proceeds going to their employers, who foster and seek them out in proportion to their beauty. When no longer profitable, they are cast adrift, or are employed in the most menial offices by their owners. In no country in the east does prostitution appear to be so much legalized as in the Panjāb nor does it any where exist to so great and unblushing an extent. In the countries East of the Indus the slave trade is limited in a great measure to the purchase and sale of girls for the purposes of prostitution, or for the supply of the harems of the great, but westward of that river, especially in the countries bordering upon Türkistan, men and women are equally made the subjects of traffic. To so great an extent was this traffic carried on at Herat before the arrival of the British mission there in 1839, that upwards of twelve thousand (12,000) persons are said to have been sold to Khiva from that city and its environs, after the siege, and so general was the trade that Shah Kamran himself, and two of his officers, were the only persons of power in the city, who were not slave dealers ; the chief of them being Yar Mahomed, the Minister and virtual ruler : 12, 14, and 20 slaves were often given for a horse.

(c) The common ignominious punishment in the east, idiomatically called "eating the shoe." Gulab's description of her own employments is taken from the life ; the daily supply of corn for each family is ground in a heavy hand-mill almost always by women. The fact that no store of flour is prepared shews why Moses forbade the millstone to be taken as a pledge, "for he taketh a man's life to pledge ;" all night long the sound of the mill may be heard in a town, a small lamp burning beside the grinder. This must be remembered to understand the

denunciation of scripture, "The sound of the mill-stone shall be heard no more at all in thee, and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee."

As to Gulabee's other tasks I have often seen such sights in a street, at mid-day; "the mistress of beauty" reclining at ease while her servant cleaned and adorned her hair. This does not, of course, apply to the upper class of women who are secluded, but in India, no one of whatever rank performs for himself or herself, any office it is possible to get any body else to do.

(d) Although this most horrid crime is by no means uncommon in many parts of Hindustan, the extent and effrontery with which the abomination is practiced in the countries west of the Sutlege exceeds belief.

The Kāngrā history has been briefly explained under the head of Sansār Chand; half-free, half-enslaved, and liable to constant insult and plunder from a barbarous government, it had small security against the inroads of the Sikhs.

(e) Give every man his due. The Raja has no receipt to this tale, and the odium thereof; but the incident is generally believed to be true not of a Sikh, but of a so called Christian Governor under the Panjāb rule. This man, it is said, sent two men to fetch a woman for his own purposes; they violated their charge, one was differently punished, the other was put to death in the manner here described.

(f) Rival Rājput tribes, in ancient days; I cannot ascertain the time when great numbers of the Chouhāns embraced Mahomedanism, but most of the mixed Mahomedan tribes on the banks of the Sutlej of the present day, claim descent from them.

In the Ayceen Akberry there is a list of seven Chouhān Princes, who reigned at Delhi, ending with Pitorah, who was defeated (having before gained seven pitched battles from the Moslem) by Sultān Mooyu-ed-deen Sani, at the battle of Thanetur, A. H. 588; but it was the great Alla-ud-deen who quite broke the power of the Clan; during his reign of twenty years he destroyed no less than eight Chouhān principalities.

To the interesting passages of Todd I refer for details of the glories of the Chouhāns and Rhatoras.

(g) Don Quixote's lessons on propriety to his squire, are much needed in the east, where the "eructations" that scandalized the Knight of La Mancha are considered no breach of decorum, but rather, after a good dinner, are a tribute to the hospitality of the host. Shade of Abernethy! What unmasticated and indigestible viands then fill the paunch!

CHAPTER SIXTH.

"A word to the wise.—Purs offers a velvet paw.—Some account of a misfortune to which all men are, have been, or will be, liable, and therefore of universal interest.—A storm gathers."

"Are spawn'd in court by base intrigues, and baser-
Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's lives."

Sardanapalus.

"If not thy sister—would'st thou save—
My life, or bid me by thy slave."

Bride of Abydos.

"Whence is woman's courage born?
What can make her peril sworn?
Whence does woman's weakness spring,
Wherefore does she twine and cling
Round a stronger, dearer arm,
Feeling there, secure from harm?
Why does woman love her home?
Why will woman fearless roam?
Why does woman glory prize?
How can woman fame despise?"

"Because within a woman's soul,
Love can every fear controul;
Because 'tis love's delightful law
From him she loves her all to draw,
For him alone, her home is dear,
With him her home is any where;
For him she loves and seeks renown,
For him she scorns a monarch's crown.
Through every changing, outward mood,
Love is her spring of ill and good!"

Manuscript Poem.

"Sooner than such as He should dwell,
Within our ancient citadel,
Let fire consume both roof and wall,
And bury us beneath their fall."

Manuscript Poem.

I must now return to the capital and shew the state of affairs there as they affected me and my interests; and this can be best

done by furnishing a translation of some of Chānd Khān's reports, a summary of which, after compliments, was to this effect: "Blessed be Allah that my master's life has been saved, and that the Sikh dog has met his desert, but it would have been better, my lord, to have put him out of the way quietly (*a*), (and there are a hundred modes of doing so,) than to rouse 'the hornet's nest you have done. There's not a ruffian about Lahaur, that adds Singh to his villain name, but affects to desire your blood. Nand Singh had many friends, they are, of course, determined on your ruin; the strict Khālsā Sikhs also look on your deed with horror, little less than if you had killed a cow; and last come the mob, loud in the cry for justice. So far Ranjit Singh has stood your friend, but I tremble to think how long he can withstand the appeals of those around him—and, but that I thought I could best serve my lord's cause by my absence, he should, ere this, have seen Chand Khan with a hundred stout followers at his feet. The times are difficult, my master, and knowing that prevention is better than cure, I am paying handsomely in all directions without respect to friend or foe; if we disarm the latter, we shall not need the former—but let your servant implore you to be cautious, the friends of Nand Singh are throwing about their bags of rupees, and in a high quarter it is being attempted to take advantage of the times, to acquire Kāngrā. Suchet Singh has even, I understand, moved off quietly in your direction, and has appointed several detachments to concentrate and join him in your neighbourhood; in the expectation that, ere he reaches, a *parwāna*, for your disgrace, will have been wrung from the Maharajah. Even this morning when the *durbār* was cleared of all but some few of the confidential Members, I heard from without, that loud words were passing, and even could hear Ranjit Singh say, that he thought you were quite right in what you had done, and that you had only failed in not informing him; that he wished he had many servants like Bellasis, who dealt equally with all sects, with the rich and the poor, and neither enjoyed cutting off men's limbs, nor confiscating their property. The Maharajah was excited, and his warmth was in full equalled by that of his *Vazirs*, the chief of whom taunted him (*b*) with infidelity, of sacrificing his own sect and pampering infidels; Ranjit affected not to observe the insolent remark, but said he should fine you, for exceeding your authority. Such scenes as these, my lord, will be daily enacted, and

the result will be that a *parwāna* will be given; when it is, *I shall decamp*, and hope to reach Kāngrā before it does. However, on no account obey:—remember the order will have been extracted from the Ruler; and that it is farthest from his desire that you should attend to it; if, however, you are so far misled as to yield up your post, or, if on the strength of the royal *sanad*, Kāngrā is wrested from you, my lord's life is not worth an hour's purchase. Silence and their ends can be best effected by your death; and *you will either be killed in open rebellion, or die of your wounds*, it matters little that not a sword be drawn, sufficient witnesses will aver to all that is required. For myself, I have been tampered with, thy servant has been thought so meanly of that filthy rupees have been offered to induce me to desert my master's interests, to sell my lord's counsel—even to be still—the Dogs! I hate them the more that they should suppose me the miscreant they are themselves, they look on a Pathān as a purchaseable commodity, they forget that he is so only when he is a forced subject, an unwilling servant; but that for his natural Chief, or the Leader of his heart, he would spill his life's blood."

Yes, I believe he's honest, mused I; and if he's not, he is indeed a wretch; awkward news all this, but let me see what the Raja and the Faqir say; the former's note being first opened. I thus read. "Health to my friend and well-wisher, the brave and wise Colonel Bellasis, a meeting with whom I am most desirous of effecting. All the friends of the noble *Wilāyī* have been stricken by grief at the intelligence of his illness, and are now thankful at his recovery; if change of air and a colder climate would benefit my friend, Jammu, Chamba and all we have is at his service. The death of Nand Singh was an unfortunate accident, is it true that in a mutiny of the Soldiers he was slain? No doubt my friend can clear up the matter, but at present the Mahārāja's *mizāj* is clouded, and his Highness desires to know what punishment has been inflicted on the murderers. What can thy well wisher say more than that during thy absence he desires no greater happiness than to receive thy pleasure-giving epistles." "The wary Raja! and does he indeed think me so *hutchā* as to be entrapped in Jammu and to clank my chains by the side of his native captives? No, if I fall into his power it shall not be alive, and with my corpse he's welcome to do his

utmost." Thus I ruminated while I unrolled the folds of the Faqir's note and spelt its cyphers, which ran to this effect. "After warmest expressions for my friend's welfare, and hopes of an happy interview, his well-wisher the Faqir, who is as nothing, would hint to the wise Bellasis that in putting to death Nand Sing, he acted inconsiderately and may thereby bring himself into trouble. This friendly epistle is however not intended to disturb, but to caution the Sâhib, lest peradventure greater evil come : His Highness favors his servant and trusts his confidential agent ; he bids me therefore remind you of the instructions you have received, and on receipt of this note, desire that you take them out, and again read them line by line, word by word, and reflect on their import :—the wise are exalted, the faithful meet with reward ; what more is needed, the comprehensive mind of Bellasis must understand." You deal in riddles Faqirjee, mused I, but I presume that it is the intention to make a cat's paw of me, to order me to give up my post and intend that I should not obey, an awkward enough predicament for an unfriended man ; in the midst of such a nest of intriguers, however, I'll do as seemeth right, and leave the result to Providence. Again I took up the cover of Chand Khan's letter and perceived a small slip of paper which had before escaped my notice ; on it was written, in evident excitement, these few lines : "This moment I have learnt that an order has been given in favor of Suchet Sing and that you are no longer Governor of Kângra :—your servant has already written fully ; repetition is needless ; may my noble master prosper ; his servant watches his interests and is all anxiety to join." I expected as much and was therefore by no means disconcerted ; to gain over then the faction generally opposed to the Rajahs, and to affect the neutrals in my favour, was now my game, and no longer to waste my means by attempting to keep terms with my powerful enemies ; I therefore at once wrote off to Chand Khan, and desired him to open a close communication with the Bhaes Ram Singh and Gobind Ram, and also to offer my best services to Fatteh Sing mîn and Kaushival Singh, as well as to the Utaree and Sandanwala Sirdars ; to Lena Singh Majetea, I myself wrote as follows :—"The fame of Lena Singh has burst the bounds of the Panjâb, it has swept to the furthest corners of Hindustan, and has reached the western countries, where the wise men pant

to become acquainted with the Plato of the age, the Aristotle of the east ;—Thy friend and well wisher, oh most excellent Sirdar ! is a poor unfriended foreigner, trusting alone to his good sword, his clean hands and his undaunted heart ; but more so to the justice and the discernment of the great monarch of the Panjab and his trusty counsellors and Sirdars, among whom, who more wise, more valiant, who a trustier comrade, a more confidential adviser, than Lena Singh : the Sirdar need not to be told of the late events at Kangra and of the storm that gathers around his well wisher, who remembering the late kindness of his friend, reminds him that the hour of adversity is the time to discover friends, to recognize enemies, and, that counting on Lena Singh as among the staunchest of the former, he now offers to him a treaty and binds himself by the most sacred pledge to requite four fold, in his need, any aid now offered to Kangra. To dilate further would be disrespectful."

Having thus taken my measures, and having, as far as my strength permitted, visited my posts, thrown up a traverse here, sprinkled crow's feet there, cleared away some rubbish and intervening buildings, and having seen that my granaries were well stored, and that, on commanding points, large heaps of rocks and stones were collected, I told off my troops to their respective posts, desiring that a vigilant look out should be kept, and with small bodies of horse I swept the country, to feel its pulse and to acquire the earliest intelligence of friend or foe. While thus busily occupied I almost forgot in my restored strength, the kind nurses and tender companions of my long convalescence, who, at my request, still occupied a sort of wing of the large old building in which I dwelt ; but whom for many days I had not seen. One afternoon after a peculiarly heavy day's work, I was enjoying the air from a balcony, a step lower than the general terraced roof of the building which, in delicacy to the females, I now avoided. Reclining half asleep and still trying to rouse myself, I was startled by the words of the following song, in the voice of the child Mahtab Konwur ; there was a pensiveness and a sadness in her tones, that if I had considered her as more than a child, would have led me to suppose she had found the hero of her choice ;—

1

" * My mother bids me seek a spouse,
To whom to give my maiden vows ;
Rajās and Thakōors, waiting near,
Abide my choice twixt hope and fear.

2.

" Within my heart a gem lies hid,
For him 'twill glow who lifts the lid ;
Within my breast a fountain sleeps,
For him 'twill gush who opes its deeps.

3.

" Within my soul I feel a power,
To love through every changeful hour ;
But none has waked that slumbering might,
Or kindled that still sleeping light.

4.

" A vision visits oft my dreams,
A bright and manly form it seems ;
But when the expectant crowd draw near,
Will such a form mid them appear?

5.

" Then who shall wear the nuptial wreath,
If none can make affection's breath ?
No, rather let me still abide,
A maiden by my mother's side."

Unwilling to intrude, but still unable to restrain myself, I ascended the little flight of steps that lead to the terrace, and found the gentle girl in tears ; she started at seeing me, and, unlike her former tender and affectionate manner, she seemed annoyed at my approach, and did all but repulse my intrusion. " What ails my gentle Mahtab, sweet child has aught distressed thee ? " " Sahib, thy *Louadee* is not a child, and it becoms her not to be thus seen with man." " Forgive me, sweetest, if I have offended, but the words

* Note.—" Hindoo women of distinction, by ancient as well as existing usage, were not debarred the sight. When a female of the royal race was marriageable, or supposed to possess a discriminating choice, she was conducted to an apartment, where many youths of her own tribe were assembled, and being desired to select from them her future husband, she distinguished the object of her partiality by throwing over his neck a wreath of flowers. This custom, I am informed, has been observed within these late years at Tanjore."

Forster's Travels.

of thy song, and more, their tones decoyed me; such melancholy ditty ill becomes my joyous Mahtab."

"Leave me, Sahib, and intrude not thus on my privacy; true we are your guests, and eat of your bounty, but my lord has not before dealt thus with the poor daughter of Kāngrā."

There was something in the tone that threw on me a flood of light. "Tell me my gentle, my sweet girl, is thy heart engaged? I would be thy friend, and would die to save thy pure heart a pang." She proudly answered, "Engaged! a Rajpoot maiden, unasked to pledge her heart"—but the effort was too much; she had too long striven, against nature, to appear unconcerned, her strength failed, and she fell at my feet, lifeless. Distressed beyond measure, but unwilling to bring witnesses to the scene, I hurried away for water and other restoratives; I chafed her temples, bathed her hands and head, and at last, to my delight, saw signs of returning life, incoherently she uttered, but the words and syllables told me her young heart was mine, and that she had looked on me with feelings far different from those with which I had regarded her. I drew her to my bosom, and swore to cherish the sweet flower to my last hour; half unconsciously she nestled towards me, and when her senses were wholly restored, I still retained her by gentle violence. In the conversation that ensued I told more of my tale than appears in these pages, and added, that I had never looked on her as other than a creature separated by an impassable barrier from myself; but now that the flood gates of my heart were opened, that I found myself loved, I could with truth and all honesty declare that I loved her as I had never loved woman; that her happiness was the dearest desire of my heart, and that I wanted only opportunity to prove my devotion, "Devotion indeed," exclaimed Mahtab, "let me be thy sister, daughter, slave, so that I shall have a right to watch thy looks, to gaze upon thee, to tend thee." "A Rajpooti (c) thou, and I a Christian!" "True, and I would that thy faith were as mine, but with thy practice, I would fain learn more of thy religion, and know the God that directs thy conduct." "The Rāni, Chunda Kowr, does she know thy secret?" "My mother has ever had my whole confidence, she saved me from the detested Dogra alliance, and she applauds, she encourages my present resolve." "'Tis well, my love, for I would not wed thee against thy parent's will; and more, circumstanced as I am, girt in

by danger, and uncertain of my position for a single day, I would not involve thee in my fate. Wilt thou then agree to this arrangement? that for twelvemonths thou shouldst remain with thy mother, it will afford time to prove whether thou understandest thyself, whether thou art prepared to be as an outcast among thy own, and to join a people to whom thou must always feel as a stranger. The position will be a difficult one, it will require all thy patience, all thy virtue, and I would not deceive thee into the idea of its being otherwise; a twelvemonth will also give me a firmer footing, or it will remove me from this troubled land, and as companion of my sojournings, or as sharer of my Kāngrā hall, thou wilt be equally prized."

"My guide, my friend, thy task is a hard one; but I believe thee to be right, and I know thee to be true; for a twelvemonth, then, I give thee up, and that twelvemonth will be to me a year of widowhood." "And to me of anxious suspense love, but we must now separate, I, to visit my posts, and thou to tell the *Rāni* of this interview."

Pressing the lovely girl to my heart, I hurried from her presence, and in a fervour of delight, a sea of conflicting emotions, I hurried around Kāngrā, dashing up steep hills across crags and down descents that quite appalled my followers. When I returned to my dwelling, what with the excitement and unusual fatigue I had undergone, I was quite exhausted; I threw myself down and courted sleep, but it fled from my eyelids; the live long night I tossed in feverish commotion, half sleeping, half waking, frightful dreams coming over me, and suddenly awakening me before I was well asleep; once I dreamt that a ruffian hand was at my throat; I started up and perceived the shadow of a tall figure gliding from the room, I called to the sentry to stop the intruder, but it was declared that no one had entered, that the figure was a phantom of my imagination. Believing it to be so, I again laid myself down, and again was so awakened; unwilling however that my men's attention should be excited, and believing this time in the reality of what I had seen, I reclined the remainder of the night, watching, with my arms at hand, but was no further disturbed: in the morning I affected to acquiesce in the prayer that my servants had often made, that near my person, one of themselves should always watch, in company with each one of the military sentries.

For some days nothing unusual occurred, when all at once my Videttes came in with intelligence of the approach of large bodies of armed men from all directions ; I had intermediately received assurance of support from Lena Singh and from several of the hill chiefs, so I desired that no opposition should be offered, but simply that *rasad* should not be supplied, and that constant and early intelligence should be given. There was not much time for further preparation ; for, before night, 12,000 men sat down before Kangra. To meet them, I had however something above three thousand trained Soldiers present, and nearly as many more stout hearts, men ready to dispute every crag and every knoll, and many of them good with a matchlock at four hundred yards. Sachet Singh, as was expected, was at the head of the host ; he had another cause of enmity besides my possession of Kangra ; I had also Māhtab Kowr, the girl who had spurned his love and rejected the alliance with his family. To do him justice, Sachet Singh was a bold and a gallant looking young man, a perfect soldier in appearance : he had many of the qualities necessary to a Commander, and with a handsome person and showy habits, was much the man to gain the hearts of a rude soldiery, and in reality he was a very popular leader, the more so indeed that not being very particular himself as to *meum* and *tuum*, he looked little to the discipline of his men, regarding every thing as light, but devotion to himself, and obedience to his commands. Such a Chief, having funds to pay his troops, has but to raise his banner in any corner of the East to be quickly joined by crowds.

But to my tale, a flag of truce was sent with the Maharaja's *parwānah*, and a polite, tho' somewhat haughty, demand for the delivery of the fort and territory : I denied not the apparent authenticity of the order, but simply remarked, that " the Maharaja had himself desired that I should make over the fort to none but himself, and that to none other should it be yielded." Replies, retorts and rejoinders passed, but I only repeated, that my ultimatum had been given, that the Raja's troops were distressing my country, and that I requested their immediate departure. Sachet Singh's camp was so pitched as to half surround the rock and to cut me off from the Janti Māta, so that he blockaded the main entrance to the fort : and bearing a Royal *parwānah*, and being himself a dignitary of the Empire and brother of the Minister, I was unwilling

to strike the first blow, or to appear to court aggression ; I therefore put up with much insolence, and even permitted his soldiery to visit my bazaars; strictly, however, enjoining the guards at the gate to allow none but single armed men under any pretence to pass. Sachet Singh was a bold man, I knew he was, and I watched him warily, I had my spies on him, as he probably had on me, the guards at the gates were trebled, and guns were so placed as to rake the approaches from them to the town and works ; slow matches, ready lighted, were concealed under the trails. The *Golandāzes* sauntered, as if carelessly, around, but each was told off to his post, and every man had his orders ; one Regiment was instructed to cover the guns ; another, in case of need, to prevent a junction from those of the enemy in the town with their brethren without ; the strong as well as the weak points were looked to, and, in full expectation of an early and impetuous attack, I awaited it in what quiet I could.

NOTES.

(a) Again I must disclaim my friend Chānd Khan's doctrines ; he writes as an oriental man of the world, brought up in the school of expediency with primitive notions of fealty, and strong feelings on all points. Such a man thinks of getting rid of an enemy, as he would of despatching a tiger or snake, *the thing must be done*, the only question is as to the safest way of doing it. But this does not bespeak blood-thirstiness, the same man would probably help the poor and oppressed.

(b) Some writer, (Captain Osborne, I believe) mentions that in 1825, when Rājīt Singh refused to join the confederacy against the British at the time of the second Bharpūr siege, his sardārs brought him woman's apparel. Is durable there is often a floodgate of speech that would astound a European subject.

(c) Captain Abbott's beautiful tale of the "Thakorine" gives many illustrations of the Rājput's, their chivalrous honor and the sacrifices they make to it. To that work I refer the reader for poetry both in subject and language. But even the prose of real life affords tales as curious as ever were invented ; in proof of which I give an incident, communicated by a friend, in whose words it follows. The facts appeared in the London prints for the winter of 1826-27 ; they furnish a specimen of the mode in which even the affections manifest themselves in an eccentric man ; let it not, however, be supposed that I meant to draw Bellasis as a person who would have thus shown his love ; though Major H's. strong and enduring attachment for his wife, shows that my story does not in this particular exceed nature.

* When I read Mahtāb Kōswar's story, I was reminded of some incidents that made a strong impression on my youthful mind. There can be no

harm in your publishing them, for they appeared at the time in the London papers, and caused a nine days wonder: they have probably long since vanished from the memory of all not personally interested in them, and my account will not bring any names before the public.

Major H. was an officer in the king's service, who served on the Madras presidency, some thirty or forty years ago. He became attached to a native lady, named Fyzoo; never I believe, regarded her with any but honorable views and married her. She bore him three children (one of whom is now an officer in the army,) and died, leaving the youngest, an infant, who bore the mother's name. Major H. quitted India upon the death of his wife, and brought her remains with him to England in a leaden coffin. Shortly after his arrival, the little Fyzoo likewise died, and her father had her remains in the same manner preserved.

Every circumstance in major H.'s story was peculiar, and took great hold of my imagination when, in my early youth, I came from a remote country-place to the part of Surrey, where he had his residence. It was an old brick house, with pointed roofs, massive window frames, tall narrow doors, winding stairs, dark passages, and all other approved materials for a regular haunted house. A high brick wall, with a dead gate, surrounded the garden in which the house stood; all was in character, the straight turf walks, the clipped yews, the noble Linden trees, and the look of neglect and wildness that pervaded every thing. On ringing for admission the gate used to be opened by an old woman, whose appearance was enough to rouse all sorts of strange ideas in the mind of an urchin fresh from the country. She had been the nurse of little Fyzoo, and had, in that capacity, attended her charge to England. As such she was much valued by her master, and continued to live with him till his death. I well remember her shrivelled black face, her white hair, and emaciated form; with her Indian dress, (that was in itself a curiosity to my young eyes,) and her broken English. I believe Major H. was never seen outside the walls of his garden, and he had so cut himself off from all his relations and friends, that it was not generally known that, in that old house, he kept enshrined the bodies of his wife and daughter. His two elder children as they grew up, went to live with other relatives, and, his sole companion was an old widow lady, as eccentric as himself. In a room within his own, a bed was laid out covered with rich Indian silks, and fancifully decorated; on that bed lay the mother and child in their long last sleep; and in this room, Major H. passed a greater part of his time. This, I believe, is the simple narrative, but, of course, much of mystery, and exaggeration was added to the stories circulated of the three singular characters, who inhabited the old house, and the supernatural beings who were suspected to reside with them.

At length Major H. died, after about twenty years' of this strange existence. His death was quite sudden; and so many suspicions had been connected with his seduction, that an inquest was held on his body. Thus the scenes that had so long been shrouded from the public eye, were thrown open: when the officials came to examine the house, the two coffins were brought to light, and this discovery of the remains of two human beings caused a further investigation.

It was a strange scene on a cold December day, that old house thrown open to all whom curiosity might lead there; the bustling Magistrates and their satellites peeping and peering into every cranny for a solution of the mysteries. The old lady, and the still older dhye, sitting like ghosts about the desecrated shrines, their strange tale long disbelieved by the authorities, while there lay the unconscious causes of all this tumult. The hardly cold body of the old soldier, the long-

drumled dust of his Eastern bride, and of their infant child. At length the Coroner was obliged to receive the real story, however incredible it seemed; and the three bodies were committed to one grave.

As to the validity of a marriage, such as the above, it was in this instance proved; for, the succession to Major H.'s property was disputed by others of the family, on the ground of his son's illegitimacy; and the law decided in the young man's favour."

The above, and indeed many living instances shew, that love is no respecter of persons, and that happy wedded affection may exist between those of different blood. Not that I advocate such connexions; they usually entail much misery on both parties; and, as genuine conversion is rare, they must often end in both parties relinquishing their own faith without adopting any other. The natural instinct, too, that leads us to prefer our own colour is doubtless not given in vain; but there are exceptions to every rule, and I would no more despise a woman for being copper-coloured than for being born in a certain latitude. There are difficulties enough in the way of such an alliance as I speak of, and when these are overcome, it must be by some strong motive. The people who refuse to countenance the connexion, when once legitimately formed, may give specious reasons; but pride, paltry pride, is generally "the moving why they do it." I well remember at home, a respected relative of my own, who would not breathe the name of the wife a young man had taken in this country, lest his mother should hear that the lady was country-born, though no other objection could be alleged against her; while the same person was one to black ball her own nephew, because he married the girl who was the mother of his children, merely because she professed a different form of Christianity.

I know these opinions lay me open to the charge of latitudinarianism, a reproach so easily and generally cast against those who are no great sticklers for form; and this is not exactly the place for a theological disquisition; yet let me say that what we stand up for in religion, ought to be rather the spirit, temper, disposition, that we may hope to take with us to heaven, there to be purified and ripened, than the names and badges that we leave with our dust. Goodness has an affinity for goodness, and rejoices to discover what it can love, in every clime, colour, and name; or, to use the hottest words, "in every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue."

When shall we learn to let our own light shine, and to rejoice in the light of others, though it came not in at our own windows? When will the purity, simplicity, and magnanimity, of men like Sir Thomas More, find acceptance with Protestants? or when will they allow that Father Matthew is not a wolf in sheep's clothing; an incarnation of evil? When this better spirit prevails, and not till then, Christians of all sects will join to shew Pagans and Mahomedans that they too have a God, and that if they do not make a parade of their worship before men, his fear dwells in their hearts, and regulates their actions.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

CONTENTS.

"Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.—It is easier to get into a scrape than out of it.—Bellasis confesses himself puzzled, thereby virtually admitting that he is not a hero."

"But hark! a song of merry cheer,
And drums, and pipes, and horns I hear;
Yet from amid the gorgeous shew,
There bursts a sound of female woe;
In palankeen of scarlet dye,
Close veiled from every curious eye,
The wailing Bride they homeward bear,
And, will she meet with comfort there?
Alas! not here does woman know
Domestic love's unclouded glow;
The husband is not here the friend
Who loving, loves her to the end!"

From lines in U. S. J., for June, 1858.

"Bath then the gloomy power,
Whose reign is the tainted sepulchre,
Seized on her sinless soul?
Must then that peerless form
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins,
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline, which is fair
As breathing marble, perish?
Must putrefaction's breath
Leave nothing of this heavenly sight,
But leathariness and ruin?
Or is it only a sweet slumber
Stealing o'er sensation,
Which the breath of rosy morn'g
Chaseth into darkness?
Will Janthe wake again;
And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life, and rapture, from her smile?
Yes! she will wake again,

Although her glowing limbs are motionless,
 And silent those sweet lips
 Once breathing eloquence,
 That might have soothed a tiger's rage
 Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror."

Queen Mañ.

It was the month of *Chait*, the marriage season, a time of more than usual stir, when all Hindua, (and the Sikhs are degenerating into little better) are on the move, engaged directly or indirectly in the *bardt(a)* of some of their kindred. The cold season was fast drawing to a close, but a heavy shower, such as sometimes falls at this season, had revived nature; all was now sun-shine; the bright orb shone through the transparent clouds with an intensity beyond description, all nature was revived, and wore a green luxuriant aspect; the rising crops were rich, and the birds, both of the hills and plains, meeting on this neutral ground, lent life to the scene; the plain and hill-sides were covered with huts, and tents of every hue and every shape, from the large enclosures and broad spreading *shamiyānas* of their leaders, to the humble *pāl* of the foot soldier or camp follower, either of which class, indeed, in the Panjāb is a lucky man when he can procure so much shelter. On such a morn, all abroad being alive, and all within Kangrá astir, a large and handsomely attended *barāt* pushed up the approach to the nearest gateway; attended by a hundred *bargaudāras*, all stout able looking fellows, each attired in a quilted *mirzāi*, with buckler at back and on their heads heavy turbans, the folds of which were intertwined with chain-work, rendering them more sabre proof than a helmet. Abiding by my order to the letter, they came unarmed, so far that they had neither matchlocks nor *talwār*, but each bore in his hand a heavy iron headed *lāthi*, such as cattle-stealers, watchmen and foot-pads carry; they pushed along jauntily and merrily, singing a marriage song not remarkable for its refinement, and shouting out the praises of the man of wealth, the liberal and beneficent *Sankār Rām Rātan* of Amritsir. As if attracted by the unusual splendour of the *barāt*, a crowd of idlers followed at their heels, but an observant looker-on might have noticed that they were not of the usual class of *tamāshās*, striplings and *badmāshes*, but mostly stout *sepāhi*-looking fellows; mixed too with them were a few of Sachet Singh's soldiers; and as the whole cavalcade advanced

to the gateway, the warder challenged and forbid the farther approach of such an unusually strong party, at so troubled a period, without express orders from the Governor. With much angry altercation, and after many a threat of vengeance on the door-keeper, a halt was called; and now the outside party increased, the idlers and lookers-on pressed forward, and before the *darwān*, whose fears were at last excited, could close the gateway, a wedge was thrown on either side, and with a deafening shout of "*wāh! Guru ji ke futteh! wāh! Purukji!*" (6) the thoughtless warder and the double sentry were felled to the earth; the loopholed chambers on either side of the massy gateway were in possession of this select band, and the pretended *barāt* was converted into a formidable company of soldiers. The *doli* was emptied of its store of arms; twenty matchlock men were thrown into either chamber, and the rest cowered under the gateway to avoid the range of the guns within, until the support from camp should arrive, which mounted and ready, had, with Sachet Singh at their head, started at full speed from the nearest point of their lines, on the first signal shout. That same shout had gathered the pretended stragglers inside—but it had also roused me and my men; and before those within could shew front, or with their *lātkis* effect a junction with their friends, they were disarmed and disposed of. The artillery men stood by their guns; the walls were manned, and Sachet Singh was received with a volley that thinned his ranks; another, given still nearer, told fearfully; and, as his column defiled to pass the causeway, knocked down men and horses, and checked the advance of the others. As, however, the enemy gained the portal, the footmen already in possession, as before agreed on, rushed out and spread right and left, leaving the front and open pathway for the cavalry; that instant, down rattled a shower of grape from my reserve guns: another and another: men and horses rolled over with shouts and imprecations; some fled or attempted to fly, but were borne forward by the press; others, more daring, and led on by their gallant Chief, gained the ascent, passed between the guns, and commenced slashing away at the *Golāndāzes*, while the footmen, some of whom had cleared the dangerous path, with another cry of "*wāh Guruji,*" attacked from the rear: but my *Najibs* were not idle; I threw back my flank companies, and with the bayonet soon cleared the intervals and rear of the few intruders. Then, waiting for a few seconds till the smoke should

clear away, I poured in a volley of musquetry and grape that left few, but the dead and dying in our path ; those that survived turned about, and, pell mell, we followed them to the gateway, now so choked up with the bodies of friends and foes that, the wedge removed, we could not close it. On other sides the attacks had been fainter, and equally unsuccessful ; two hundred bodies of the assailants were found, and twenty of my own brave fellows fell in the struggle.

" The die is now cast, I'll go the whole hog and pay off my friend in his own coin," mused I, as, going the rounds that evening, I ordered a sharp look out to be kept ; and affecting to fear another attack, I ordered the lancers, Khushiyāl Singh's *paltan* and one of the *Najibs* to stand by their arms at midnight ; in the meantime I sent three separate expresses, to the same purport, to Lena Singh ; it was in a cipher, and was to this effect :—" My friend's timely offer of aid is accepted ; the honor of his servant and well-wisher has been attempted ; but, thanks be to a higher power, and to my good followers, we beat back the assailants. My friend, it is now our time for attack, this night at four *gharis* after midnight (the exact minute my wise and skilful friend will know, as the planet Venus then rises,) I purpose to *ch'hipao* the enemy's camp, and make the Kāngrā territory too hot for him. My desire is this, that while thy servant pours down upon Sachet Sing himself, who is encamped under the Jainti Mātā, my excellent friend will, with his brave troops, assail the other flank of his camp on the opposite side of Kāngrā. In the hour of need compliments are vain ; true friendship requires no smooth words, what more need be said ?" Assured that a diversion would be made by Lena Singh, and that a band of friendly hill-men would also rush down from the Jainti Mātā on the raising of my war shout, I closed all egress as far as possible, and, earlier than usual, retired. At midnight I arose, and for the first time disclosed my intentions to my followers. Ali Verdi Khan and others attempted to dissuade me, " Not, Sahib, for the danger's sake : our master knows we love the battle's din, but 'tis the after consequence at court we fear." " Good my fine fellows," I replied, " I take not the step without reflection ; cautiously and carefully I guarded against giving offence ; galling as it was, I have borne with the intruders these many days in the lands entrusted to my charge, and for wrong, injury, and insult, I have returned civi-

lity and forbearance—but the business of to-day has altered matters, they have drawn the *talwār*, they may throw away the scabbard too, for the sabre of Bellasis shall not be sheathed while they continue to defile his territory." "We are your servants," was the reply. "It is our duty to warn, and it is our duty equally to obey."

My new *Nāib*, the successor of Nand Singh, was more of my own way of thinking, he had as little respect as myself for the minions of the court, and feeling that they had long kept him from his rightful place at the head of the Lancers, and grateful to me for raising him from unmerited obscurity, he echoed my sentiments, and breathed out nothing but extermination to the besiegers. Sohan Lāl was a character, and ought sooner to have been brought before the reader's notice; he was by birth and caste a *Kāyat* (c) of Furruckabad, in the British provinces, of a tall and gaunt form, immense nose, sallow and long face, of awkward gait and sinister expression; he was a man who, well kept in hand, was most valuable, and, unwatched, would have been an incarnation of rascality. I had seen and heard a good deal of him before I promoted him, but as I felt that mine was no situation in which to employ fools or cowards, I preferred to take Sohan Lāl, a foreigner, and a hardy, plucky, and shrewd fellow, to hampering myself with a smoother-faced and more righteous piece of inefficiency. The peculiarities of this man's character were many; he had been to me a kind of pay-master and accountant, and, at the same time, that he was every night drunk, I never saw him at sun-rise unemployed; indeed I have often called him from his books at midnight, but at whatever hour his day's labours ended, that was his moment of recreation; the green spot of time that repaid his day's toil, when, under a dose of liquid fire, he would sink into insensibility, which generally lasted till the morning's ablutions brought him to his senses. This frightful habit nearly deterred me from promoting him, but on his own behalf he urged that if he was at my service for eighteen hours in the twenty-four, the other six might surely be his own. Knowing no better *Nāib*, I installed him, and during the term of my government, he gave me no material cause to repent of his appointment.

My plan of action was this, that an hour after midnight All-verdi Khan, with his Multānis on foot, Khushiyāl Singh's men, and a wing of the first *Najibs*, should move quietly out of the two gateways, and should stealthily and in small parties creep towards the

picquets of Sachet Singh's own immediate encampment ; a few should file off to the extremities of the camp, but the mass should lie concealed opposite the Rājā's tents, as near as possible, without risking discovery ; and from what I afterwards heard, they might that night have walked quietly up and cut the ropes of his sleeping tent over his head, for such was the fatigue and want of caution after the morning's attack, that less than the usual vigilance was observed, and all were silent and sleeping. Just as the star appeared above the horizon, the head of my column of Lancers emerged from the gateway ; and truer to the signal than myself, at the same moment the war cry arose from the opposite direction, and the shouts of Lena Singh's men, and the cries of those he attacked, rent the air. The alarm given, the picquets and guards opposed to us turned out ; my infantry took up the signal and pushed on, but as I had half a mile to cross with the Lancers in a dark night, on very uneven ground, I lost the opportunity of being able to take advantage of the first surprize with my horsemen ; however, as it was, we did much mischief, we drove in the guards, slaughtered many, half-armed and just aroused from their sleep. Cowering from the chill air of night with their whole heads enveloped (d) in their *chuddars* and *kamals*, many heard no other sound than the death stroke of the sabre that sent them to eternity. Two new guns, on which Sachet Singh prided himself, we captured and should have taken himself prisoner, but being a late sitter, he was only retiring, when the first cry of battle rung in his ears ; and to his exertions and his personal bravery, as much as to my not having moved the Cavary five minutes sooner (e), it was owing that his camp did not suffer more material mischief : however, such as was the blow, it sufficed to make the enemy evacuate the territory, and the next morning's sun saw little of Sachet Singh's proud array ; his rear guard, still within sight, tempted my hot bloods to follow, and even those who were for peace the last night, having now twice tasted of blood, were eager for the chase ; but I answered, " No, they have had enough, my object is gained, I would now rather help them on their way, and further their departure." I then gave orders to look through their deserted camp, and bring in any wounded that might have been left, and to bury and burn the dead.

These emergent duties fulfilled, I hastened back to share my triumphs with Māhāb Kowr, though, since we had been on the

footing of lovers, her company was a pleasure in which I had thought it right to indulge but sparingly. During the alarm she felt on hearing of Sachet Singh's approach, I had tried to soothe and re-assure her, and, when necessarily absent, kept up continual intercourse with her, and the Rānī by means of trusty messengers and pre-concerted tokens. So great had been the terror caused to Māhtāb by the threatened Dogur alliance, that she could only attribute the attack to a design against herself, and she had conjured me in the most solemn manner, rather to take her life than to allow her to fall into the power of her enemy : I told her that the abettor of suicide was in my creed, as guilty as the murderer, and that, with whatever intent, were I to shed, or cause to be shed her blood, I should go down to my grave with the weight of blood upon my head. What was in my power, however, I did, and told off a select party, who were ordered to stand by her and the Rānī ; and on the enemy gaining a certain point, were to effect their retreat from the citadel by a subterranean passage ; all had been quietly and effectually settled, and I had little fears for her safety, but a presentiment of evil hung like a cloud over her young brow ; she knew, she said, some event was about to happen, but could not realize its nature. From the day Sachet Singh's force appeared, the music of her voice was still, and during the short sharp conflict at the gateway, the strings of her heart had well nigh snapped, when she heard that the foe was within the gates ; she heard peal after peal, and volley after volley close to the entrance of her concealed chamber, —and when, in the exultation of victory and the pride of the hour, I rushed to lay my laurels at her feet, I found my heart's treasure extended lifeless on the floor. The first horror of that moment I will not affect to describe :—my grief was, however, soon turned into joy, when I discovered that she had only fainted. It was long before I could restore her to consciousness and to the certainty of her safety, but at length she recognized me, and understood my assurances that the danger was over. The innocent creature crept up closely to me and said " now I'm safe, the world cannot hurt me, but oh ! leave me not alone again." Gently I re-assured her, and gradually, the slight color that tinged her lovely cheek recovered its place, and with the buoyancy of youth and innocence, she forgot her late alarm sooner than I did myself.

Now came the most difficult part of my no easy game ; how was I to explain my conduct at court ? The truth I knew would benefit

me very little there, and, when my Chief Judge was to be the person I had most deeply offended, of what avail would be the best plea? I therefore determined to attempt no defence, and simply wrote that Rajah Sachet Singh had made an attempt to seize the fortress; that, as in duty bound, I had withstood him, and, by the Maharajah's *iqbal*, success had attended my efforts. The replies I got both from Rajah Dhyân Singh and Faqir Azîzûdîn were harsh and peremptory; I was desired forthwith to give over charge to my *Nâib* and to attend at the presence. Chând Khân wrote differently:—"My master has done well, and at heart and secretly the Maharajah rejoices, but the Faqir has been gained over by the Rajahs, and, naturally afraid of them and their superior influence, he has deserted my patron. But be of good cheer, *sâhib*, obey no order given by other mouth than the Mâharâjah's, and rely on it he never intends Kângrâ to fall into the hands of the brotherhood. Again, let thy servant beg to be recalled, to share my master's perils:—here my office is irksome, and in truth I have many temptations; my hand is better than my head; Chând Khân may be misled and may unthinkingly disobey; he would avoid such peril. To say more would be disrespectful."

Chând Khân's letter gave me some uneasiness, I was averse to recall him, and yet if he was to remain at Lâhaur against his will, he was not likely to prove a very useful Vakil; I therefore resolved as soon as possible to gratify his wishes, but the fulfilment of my intention was prevented as will hereafter appear, and to elucidate matters I must now return, for a little, to Lâhaur.

With spies in every direction, and paying liberally, Rajah Dhyân Singh was acquainted with all that passed in the Panjâb; little then as Chând Khân was aware of it, his former occupation, his haunts and his companions, all were known to the minister, who was intent on seizing him at the time he took my service, when, seeing his ability and spirit, he spared him as thinking him a good instrument for his own purposes: but when, to his astonishment, the Rajah found the solitary and unfriended Multânî, proof against his bribes, the robber and bravo true to his trust, that moment the great man determined on his destruction, and in a *Pathân*, by name Dâod Khân, found a fitting instrument. Of the same tribe as Chând Khân, this man affected to have taken a great liking to the Vakil, who thoughtless and open-hearted, soon fell into the snare.

In an hour of pretended confidence, Dâod Khân opened his heart to his friend, and told him how pleasant was his line of life, how easy to destroy the rulers of the land and to ride in their places; Chând Khân's secret nearly came to his lips, but he restrained himself, warned his companion that he was a Government servant and could not again listen to such language or associate with such a person; "Indeed," replied Dâod Khan, "has the trusty Vakil so soon forgotten his calling and lost all taste for roving? a word in my friend's ear," and putting his mouth close up to his terrified companion, whispered, "Is then Mâyob Khân forgotten; does not my voice recall those jolly times when we held our meetings under the forest shade, and carved our way through the land?" Chând Khân thus pointedly reminded, called to memory that the man before him, was a villain who had been turned out of his band for cruelty and murder; for some years he had disappeared, and time and change of name had prevented recognition by the keen eye of his former Captain. Feeling himself thus in a villain's power, and panting for release from his present sedentary pursuits, the victim was, after much persuasion, and after binding by an oath the fictitious Dâod Khân, (now to be called by his proper name of Mâyob) that he should shed no unnecessary blood, he consented to join him on certain freebooting expeditions. It was while thus tempted, and before he had committed himself, that he addressed me, and so urgently begged to be recalled; but the false step once taken, he was silent, and I had begun to think him again contented with his lot; when who should meet me one day in my morning's ride, but Chând Khân on his road from Lahaur! The reason of this unexpected and unwelcome apparition, my *Vakil* shall give in his own words.

In reply to my irritated questions, he answered, "Yes, my lord, thy servant has erred, he has deserted his trust, but the Supreme daily forgives his creatures; my master will then pardon his slave, whose heart is as ever devoted, and if his head deceived him, and he was led away by a traitor, he is still no less faithful to the interests of the noble Bellasis." He then told of Mâyob Khan's trap, and added, "feeling myself at the mercy of a villain who would have sold his brother for a ducat, I unwittingly engaged with him against the enemy I hate; for a time the miscreant kept our compact, shed no blood and attacked only Sikhs;

but before long he was tempted by the approach of a party of Nourias, who, as my lord knows, are the most honest and the most enterprising merchants of Western and Upper India; these men he waylaid, their principal he slew, and plundered them to the amount of several thousand rupees; what ensued I know not, and care not, but in open *darbār* I was taxed with the murder, and Mayob Khan was produced as a *Meerkhai*, as participator in the scene and witness of my guilt; most truly I denied all part in the transaction, for I was not only absent, but had used all my influence to prevent the attack. Before, however, I was aware that murder had taken place, I received from Mayob as my share, some *pashminās*, which had all private marks; one of these I was wearing when accused, and several of the Nourias and their attendants swore more or less positively to its identity; no further evidence was required; Mayob Khan was made a *Jamadar* of Gurcharas, and I was told that if I confessed not within twenty-four hours, I should be put to the torture. For once, they spoke truly, for I was led to an old tower and there heavily ironed and chained to the wall; twice during the day was I again questioned, and it was hinted that if I gave up my lord's service, my pardon and promotion should be ensured. I spurned the base offer, and told them to work their will; again, the next morning, I was questioned, offered the same promises, and the same threats were held out; I replied as I had done before, when I was immediately thrown down on my face, my legs and arms extended to their utmost stretch, and with a heavy weight on my shoulders and loins, I was left to my own thoughts. How long this lasted, I know not, for I fainted, and when I came to my senses, I found the Jailer, Mayob Khan and others, around me, rudely removing my irons and offering me water, a quantity of which had been thrown over my head and body; for a day I was nourished and cared for, when again I was told to confess, to implicate my master, or to bear worse inflictions. I replied that life was to me worthless, and begged that they would end my days, and not harass me with questions, that I could not and would not answer; again I was tortured until life seemed extinct, and fearing that they had overdone their work and that their victim was now beyond their reach, every exertion was made to restore sensibility, but it was long before my senses returned, and I woke to a sense of my situation, and to the horrors that awaited me. The Jailer

alone was then present; to my surprise he spoke kindly and soothingly, and, Sikh as he was, I found in Ram Singh a kind and an active friend; he told me how unwillingly he had been made the instrument of my sufferings, and that he had now arranged for my escape; that my servant, with a litter lay at the time within a hundred yards, and that if I had strength for the undertaking, he would that instant carry me to it; "the way is now clear" said the good man, "another opportunity may not occur, for I'm not altogether trusted." Faint and weary as I felt, I hesitated not a moment; he raised me in his arms, and in an hour I was safely ensconced in a hiding place within the suburbs of Lahaur; my horses I sent on, and the moment I could bear the jolting of a litter, I quitted the hateful city, and have been preserved, once more, to the presence of my muster. My friend and preserver Ram Singh accompanied my flight; though old and a Sikh, he is still strong of arm and true of heart; I have therefore ventured to promise him my lord's protection."

While Chând Khân spoke, a fine old grey-beard rode forward, offered a military salute, and tendered his services. I desired him to be *hazir*; and to Chând Khân I addressed myself severely, telling him that by his folly he had added doubly to my difficulties, and had not only implicated me in his crimes, but by leaving me at such a juncture without a *Vaqil* at the *darbar*, placed me in the position of a rebel. "Not so my lord," was the reply; "feeling that a storm was brewing and uncertain as to my fate, I had prepared a document with my lord's seal (and I need not say that *real signatures* are easily procurable in the Lahaur *bazar*) appointing as *Vaqil* the trusty and well approved Lalla Sukhum Lâl in room of Chând Khân, recalled. The Lalla is a smooth spoken and a wily man, my lord, and will better match the hangers on at the *darbar* than your less cautious servant before you." "On my word Chând Khân, you are a free actor as well as speaker; but these matters must be discussed hereafter, for the present you are under charge of Aliverdi Khan, from whom you will take orders, and who will bring you to *darbar* at the third *pahar* (g). I turned away my horse and left Chând Khân astonished at his reception, and at the cold and ungracious manner he had been met, after the services he had performed, and dangers he

had undergone. I too felt that I had treated him harshly, but openly to recognise his acts would be impolitic, and I felt moreover all I said as to the manner he had committed me.

No sooner had I returned to my dwelling than I received a *parwāna* from the *darbār* to the following effect:—"You are again ordered to the presence; your accounts are in arrear, and it is necessary they be adjusted; you will then be permitted to return to Kāngrā. Your *Vaqil*, Chānd Khān, is a culprit, he has been convicted of murder, and has escaped justice, taking with him his jailer; they must both have fled to Kāngrā, you are ordered to give them up, to place them in irons, and with all despatch to send or bring them to the presence. Sukhun Lall is a good man, and he is permitted to attend the *darbar*, you acted wisely in appointing him, you had been wiser to have done so sooner. Consider the orders herein contained as imperative, and not to be slighted, but fulfilled to the letter; what more need be said."

This is more than I expected, less violent than I looked for, thought I; and, while I was turning over in my mind how I should act, Chānd Khān was brought before me, as I had previously ordered. I read to him and those present, that part of the *parwana* that concerned himself, telling him that I felt interested in his state, and believed he had not willingly injured my interests; but that, as the servant of the *darbār*, I was bound to execute its orders, and that he must therefore be placed under restraint, until I could procure a more favourable injunction in his behalf. My decision caused much surprize, and many around buzzed out that it was not a time to cast away friends, or to lose the services of good *shumsheres*; but I ordered off the prisoner, and proceeded to the ordinary business of the day.

That evening, when all was quiet, I moved over to the quarters of Aliverdi Khān, and desired him to leave me alone with Chānd Khān; my little *Vaqil* mounting the high horse, assumed the air of an injured man; but I bade him have done with foolery, to reflect on my position and his own; on the little means I had of effectually protecting him and the critical position of my own affairs; he soon came to his senses, and replied, "I knew my Lord was not really angry with his servant, but that before strangers he deemed it politic to trample on his faithful well-wisher—let it be so, sacrifice me if you will; Chānd Khān will live or die, the ser-

vant of Bellasis." "Truly I mean you well, Chand Khan, but how to aid you is the difficulty, and as I have neither the desire nor the ability to strike for independence, I see not how to extricate either myself or you from the web around us." "The sword • my lord is your remedy ; the meshes are not to be unravelled ; but they can be cut. When he whom they call Maharajah, first stood in his father's stirrup, his power was less than yours at this moment ; he had every thing against him, and the boy Ranjit Singh, beset by enemies, by doubtful friends, false allies and open foes, at the head of the weakest of the twelve *misals*, had less room to look for supremacy than you have now : he owes entirely to his own decision, promptness and wariness the position he now holds. He had no such hold as Kangra in which to place his family and treasure, but with the mere sheepfold of Gujraoli as his centre of action, and every man's property as his aim, he soon became, by dint of mere energy, the lion he is now. My master's purse is as heavy as his was then, his troops as numerous and better disciplined, his own fame and ability greater, and his name for faith and fair dealing how much superior ? Form then a league, my lord, with some of the older *Sardars*, who are chafing at the daily tyrannies and resumptions of the usurper, raise but your banner and you will excite a flame from Kangra to Dera Ismael Khan ; Kashmere is ripe for revolt, Multan has yet scarce fitted on the yoke ; Bahawal Khan chafes for the possessions he has lost, Futteh Singh Aloowala scarce acknowledges the *darbār's* superiority ; these all want but a leader of name, and a hope of recovering their lost independence and equality, to take the field. To many of the Sikh *Sardars* you might unite the Rājputs of the hills, the Mahommedan and mixed tribes of the westward."

"Your counsel is always bold, Chand Khan, but I love not to play the traitor ; tell me, however, what cause of offence have the chiefs, you have mentioned, received ? Give me, in short, a sketch of the histories of any with whom you are acquainted, but stick to facts, let there be no amplifications." "Good, my lord, I will commence with my own country, Multan, of which I need not say all *Puthāns* feel deeply the wrongs, and that, at the raising of Sarfaraz Khan's banner, every son of the faithful would flock around him. A single *paltan* now holds the town and citadel, and with permission from my lord and the aid of the Daod-

pootras(*h*) on the opposite side, I could in twenty-four hours be in possession of both. And has not Bahawal Khan good reason for hatred to the Sikh? Were not the fertile fields and rich lands bordering on Multan, the old possessions of his family? Did he not hold also the farming of Dera Ghazi Khan? And has he not been stripped of his every *bigah* of land on this side, and driven to the borders of the desert, and saved only from entire absorption by the interference of the *farangis*? Bahawal Khan burns for vengeance, and could, on an emergency, turn out a thousand horse and thrice as many footmen, all hardy and trusty soldiers, accustomed to toil, to brave the horrors of the desert and as guides, or as sportsmen, to pass for days and nights through untrodden and unwatered wastes. Next we have the Khan of Mamdot; and does not Kütub-udin Khan(*i*) feel that the broad lands of Kasür, the rich city and its hundred towers have been wrested from him by the Sikh? That his father dwelt in peace and in honor where now the Sikh dogs revel? That his brother fell by the knife of an assassin, directed by the enemy that aimed at conquest by sowing dissension, by treachery and by guile? But still better, if Kutub-u-din fails us, we have his nephew, Futteh Khan, the son of his elder brother, the murdered Nizam-u-din Khan, and the rightful heir of Kasür and Mamdot; he has taken the service of his hereditary enemies in the vain hope of, by their aid, supplanting his uncle, but his heart is now sick with hope delayed; he has many secret well-wishers, for his uncle's rule is a hard and an ignorant one, and we might in a day put Futteh Khan in possession of Mamdot, and through him wield the resources of its territory in our behalf. And have we not Sher Singh to our hand? The acknowledged son of the Maharajah, the idol of the army, the boon companion of the *Sardars*, a good man in the front of battle, and one to be easily led away by well laid-in persuasions: he knows he can never be Maharajah, and he fears for his own safety in the event of Ranjit Singh's death. His opportunities for preparation too are good, for, holding almost all the lands on the other side of the Sutluj, and mixed up with the *farangi's* dependencies, he can, almost unobserved, collect his means, as also can Futteh Singh Al-loowala, who feels more gratefully his present treatment by Ranjit, in that they were turband brothers, and at one time the power of the present Maharajah was less than his own, and his friendship and alliance courted; now, however, his *jaghirs* are being seized,

resumed or assessed, and no bounds are set to the extortion employed, but the fear of throwing him into the arms of the *farangi*. All I have mentioned are surely ours; Lena Singh too is your friend and has committed himself, and in the son of Desa Singh you have the best, the wisest, and the most honest of the Sikhs; a man, who, among a race of dissolute debauchees, employs his time and his money in works of usefulness and deeds of charity. The hill chiefs then, are they not yours? Have you been so long among them that their Rajahs have not let you into their confidence? and where the rightful chiefs are clanking the chains of the brother Rajahs, or eating the bread of dependence, have not their faithful clansmen told you the tales of their master's woes, of their hopes and their fears?"

"Really Chand Khan, you are exceeding the bounds of my desires; I wanted not to know who are traitors to the Maharajah's salt, but the history, the rise of each of the principal *Sardars*." "My lord is cautious and he is right, but Chand Khan feels strongly, and he cannot but speak bitterly," and stretching out his arms and his legs, "look at these bruises, can I forgive them, can I forget? No, never, while Sikh dog exists, or while one drop of blood runs in the veins of Chand Khan!"

In such like conversation, in soothing his irritated mind, and in gathering from him, as I best could the state of affairs and parties at Court, I passed the night, and desiring him and Alivenli Khan to be silent as to my visit, I returned to my own abode and to my solitary couch.

NOTES.

(a) A Sanskrit word, from "*Bri*," "to choose or select"; it is the term applied to the marriage festivity when the groom takes home the bride. In the Panjāb, beyond the Ravi, as well as in the hills, this procession is called "*jand*" or "*junt*."

(b) "*Guru-ji*" has been already explained: "*Wah! Guru-ji ke fatteh!*" "*Wah! Purakji!*" is the war-cry enjoined to the Sikhs by their founders, and is literally, "*hurrah* for the conquering priest! *Hurrah* for the hero!" *Purak* is "*a man*," ("*vīr*,") and is used for "*the man*," the hero of his race.

(c) A branch of the low-cast Hindus who do not "*forswear sack, and live clearly*;" nevertheless, they are an able and hard-working race; most of them read and write Persian, so that they, with the Brāmans, have long been the accountants and secretaries of their ignorant Mahomedan conquerors.

(d) Eastern and Western notions of comfort are very different: an Oriental

begins his wrappings up at his head, decreasing them as he descends, till his feet and legs are left bare: if he possesses but one piece of the cloth for covering, that one piece is given to the head. This practice makes the Natives bad watchmen, especially as it never enters their philosophy to keep themselves warm by exercise.

(e) Bellasis means that he ought to have allowed time for his Cavalry to cross the plain; he had told Lena Singh that the onset was to commence exactly as the planet rose, but he did not issue from the gateway till that time, thus allowing the enemy to give the alarm from Lena Singh, before Bellasis himself was clear of the fort.

(f) Forgery and perjury form a regular and profitable trade in all large Asiatic cities. The reader must remember that, as already stated, the seal is very usually affixed to a document, instead of a written signature: when thus employed, wax is not used in the process; the seal is covered with the glutinous ink used in Eastern writing, the paper is moistened with the tongue, and the seal stamped upon it. The operation, when dexterously performed, leaves a neat impression, a black ground with the characters in white. Those who trade in the preparation of documents keep the most requisite seals of every age, ready for use, and others can be had at a short warning. Practice makes the same individuals very expert in the mysteries of erasing, interlining, and other such craft, used by more civilized nations.

(g) In the East, the twenty-four hours are divided into eight watches, of three hours each, commencing, among the Musalmans, at sun-set, with the Hindus at day light. Each "*pahar*" contains eight "*gharris*" or sub-divisions, of a trifle more than twenty minutes each. The difference in the time from which they begin to count, makes great confusion. "In night attacks, ambuscades, sallies, &c. to be executed, some days previous to their execution, between a Musulman and a British officer, if the latter has ordered the former to carry a particular operation into effect on *Mangul ke rat*, or *Tuesday night*, his expectations will evidently be anticipated one whole day, as the Musulman, according to his notions of time, will do the duty required, upon Monday night." So observes Dr. Gilchrist; and I have seen a lady expecting visitors the following morning, make arrangements with the "*maître d'hôtel*" in the evening, for *to-morrow's* breakfast, which consequently the man supposed to refer to the next morning but one—thereby occasioning a dilemma, "more easily imagined than described.

(h) "*Sons of David*" literally; derived from *pūtra*, a son, and *Dāud*, David; the term by which the ruler of Bahawalpūr and his clan distinguish themselves, tracing their pedigree to an ancestor in Scinde, whence they emigrated about a hundred years ago. The Dāud-pūtras are a tall, fine looking race, but all the "foregone conclusions" of physiognomy are sadly at fault, among the venerable, manly, intelligent, courteous, mild-looking—*ruffians* that we meet in the East. The most amiable-looking Hindu I ever met, was a t'bag!

(i) Chānd Khān here goes beyond the mark: Kūtūb-u-dīn was brother to Nizām-u-dīn Khān, a Pathan soldier of fortune, who gained Kasūr by his sword towards the end of the last century. In the time of Akbar, while Kasūr was still under a Hindu Raja, seven hundred Pathan families had been permitted to settle there, and eventually became paramount in that district, subject, however, to the throne of Delhi. But, though the Musulman power in Kasūr is of so old a date, the present ruler, as above stated, is of a recent family. "*Holding almost all the lands.*" Here again the little Miltani exaggerates: Kowr Sher Singh's *ja, ghir*, on the left bank of the Sutlej, would never have been above a lakh and a half yearly.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN.

CONTENTS.

"The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things."—*Scandal is a dainty dish.*—"Peace has her victories, as well as war."

"For the transgression of a land, many are the rulers thereof."

Solomon.

"He makes a solitude, and calls it peace."

Hackneyed quotation.

"Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
Yet likes a slice, as well as he."

Creeper.

—"Enough

For me, if I can make my subjects feel
The weight of human misery less, and glide
Ungroaning to the tomb! I take no licence
Which I deny to them. We all are men."

Sardanapalus.

"Confound Chând Khân," muttered I, as tossing on my bed, I thought over my position, "confound the meddling blockhead, he must be sacrificed—but no—that will never do; he's true, I feel he is, and it is myself that am to blame for leaving him to be tempted in that hot-bed of vice. But I should like to know how my late visitor gets on; how the gallant Sachet Singh bears his defeat? and whether he will venture to proclaim it, in all its truth, and to its full extent, at court? I suspect not, and that the brotherhood will for their own credit sake, for the present pocket the affront. I may, therefore, sleep soundly for a time, but must reckon that a heavy score is against my name when opportunity offers. 'Tis well to look to the bright side, so begone dull care and come to my eyelids gentle sleep." Thus half talking, half dreaming, between sleep and wakefulness, I saw the tinge of morn before my eyelids were effectually closed; shortly after my usual hour, however, I rose and pursued my accustomed avocations.

In reply to the *darbâr's* orders, I stated that Chând Khân was in custody, that my own opinion was, that he was innocent of the

crime alleged against him, though culpable in other respects; and I begged that, as my servant, I should, as was the custom, be permitted to punish him myself.(a)

For my own part, though I affected ease and bore confidence on my brow before others, I felt there was much to trouble me; I satisfied myself that I was in the right, that I had in no point exceeded my duty, or departed from the spirit or letter of my orders. Lena Singh's alliance was a favourable point, his character standing so high, and his weight in the *darbâr* being considerable; to whatever extent I was implicated, he was to a greater, for I defended but my own, he came out of his way to attack the royal troops.

I kept up my friendly communications with the good *Sardâr*, visited him, and received him in return at Kāngrā; his appearance and bluff air had more of the soldier than the courtier or the Philosopher; he was about thirty-five years of age, of stout athletic build, dark complexion, middle stature, and with large whiskers, as well as the usual Sikh beard; with him I made many interesting conversations.

Chānd Khān's tongue was a never ceasing engine; he would tell me the tales and legends of the early wars of Ranjit Singh, how he had beguiled this Chief, outwitted the other; how he had got possession of Lābaur; how he first failed and then succeeded against Multān, how narrowly his army escaped destruction in his first attempt on Kashmīr, and by how little prowess he finally acquired it; by what arts he removed the Pathāns from Kassūr; and how he was even, at that time, devising the acquirement of Pashāwar—what little bowels of mercy he had ever displayed towards his own kindred, witness his conduct towards his own mother, and to Sada Kowr, his mother-in-law, one of the chief instrument of his rise. "She was a wonderful woman, my Lord, valiant in battle, wise in *darbār*; she was a wonder among the ignorant and besotted Sikhs; you know that when a mere girl, her young husband fell in fight against him, the father of whom she raised by the alliance with her daughter, and who requited her by plunder, long imprisonment, contumely and death; for to her proud spirit a prison and a grave are much alike;—witness then the treatment of Sahāb Singh of Gujarāt, his paternal aunt's husband; see indeed how he and his father before him, threw off, as old garments, the ministers and the tools of their several acts as they pro-

gressed, and with what base ingratitude they forsook, betrayed, or destroyed the companions of their early fortune."

"Giving all license, Chând Khân, to your Pathân enmity and Musalmân zeal, I cannot but think you undervalue the Sikhs generally, and the Maharajah especially."

"Wait, *Sâhib*, till you have seen the effects of their rule as I have, till you have traced the line of their desolations as I have done, till on your own body you have borne the weight of their tyranny as I have done, and then you will be better able to correct, or to estimate my opinions."

"You and your race have suffered, Chând Khân: and I too, my friend, have I not tasted the cup of bitterness at their hand? But we must be just, and separate the evil and the designing from the noble and the true."

"And so I will, my Lord, when I find the latter, but 'tis hardly among their chiefs I am likely to do so; Lena Singh is the best of them, and he chiefly shines because he's one star in a very black night."

"You are severe, Chând Khân, but do you give the Maharajah no credit for the order and submission into which he has brought his country, for the security of life, for the protection of trade, for, in fact, substituting one master and one *hukûmat* in the place of a hundred chiefs and a thousand tyrannies?"

"If he had done all you say, or half, I should indeed call him a blessing to this land; if desolation is order and submission, you are right my lord, for vast tracts have been abandoned and left uncultivated, owing to the severity of his rule, and to the people being literally sold to the farmer of the revenues: the boasted security of life means little more than that the Maharajah does not himself sentence capitally; but he would do better if he did, than by maiming all thieves, whether young or old, whether new to vice or hardened in its scenes, putting them all on a footing, raising every man's hand against them, and leaving them no resource but robbery. But what protection is there for life in the Panjab, except in a slight degree for the great? Does my Lord mean that if I, or any other poor man, was to-morrow to be cut down in a street of Lâhaur, there would be enquiry made? Not at all, unless indeed the *Kotwâl* could turn it to account by laying my death at the door of some one who

could pay ; but, is the poor man's death, whether by open or secret murder, ever avenged, ever thought of ? And is it not worse than murder, that every marauding scoundrel of a *Sardâr* should be permitted to maim God's creatures (*b*), even for wrong committed, much more, as is too often the case, on mere suspicion, or on false accusation ? How then is the Maharajah sole monarch when all around him can thus act ? Ay, and can also plunder at will the merchants you talk of his protecting, that is, by making them pay arbitrary duties, and detaining them at will at their *chokies* and *ghâts*, and harassing them with every vexation."

"How do you reconcile the propriety of Amritsir and Lahâur with what you have just said ?" "Very easily *Sahib*, the court and camp are the life-breath of Lahaur ; remove them and it again becomes a desert ; the annual progresses of the Maharajah to Amritsir, its sanctity as a place of pilgrimage, as the centre, in short, of the Sikh religion, are reasons for its importance ; it is then the *one* place of collecting the hill produce for diffusion in the plains ; the manufactures of Kashmir are prepared on orders from Amritsir, and the different productions of the Kângrâ and Mandi hills are there gathered and exchanged for the produce of the plains ; but I have heard, and my Lord knows much better than I do, that while the whole trade of the Panjâb is confined to these two cities, and while Multân, Kupoertulla, Pak-Patan, Kussoor, Khem-Karan, and a hundred places of former note have fallen away to mere villages, or to heaps of ruins, there are hundreds of cities in Hindustân, little inferior in wealth to Amritsir and Lahâur ; and, it has often been said within my hearing that, since Ambâlâ and Ludianâ have sprung up under the *Farangi* fostering, the wealthy ones of our two cities would be glad to move themselves there, could they carry away their treasure, or escape plunder or total confiscation for thinking of so doing."

"Yes, I hear that traders above all others prosper under British rule, but that the constant changing of systems and of custom regulations, tries their patience and their pockets too ; and let me tell you, their Custom House Officers no more than ours, or any in the world, are immaculate ; on the other side of the Suduj, you'll hear as many or more complaints on this head as here, you will find also that the police of the *Farangi* is far from perfect, and that though the British do not maim, they let out thieves and robbers after they have

caught them; because they won't confess, and instead of punishing them doubly for lying as well as stealing, give them lessons on quibbling; there they build huge jails (c) and thrust into them and mix up people of all classes; honest men who have been unfortunate, and villains and desperadoes. Indeed, in my opinion, there is little to be said in their favor, further than that by their stronger arm they keep their territory more submissive than the Maharajah does his. On the other hand, if we look calmly around us, we shall see in the Panjáb much to applaud, even though there is too much to reprobate." "Ah *Sâhib*, saving your presence, and emboldened by your candour, your servant would represent that *those* were the days, when the chivalrous Bâbar rode through the land; he was not of our race, but he was a true Pâdshah; then there were Akbar, and Aurangzeb, patterns of monarchs; they permitted no idolatrous dogs to pollute the land; and Mâhmûd, my countryman, the gallant and brave child of the bride of cities, Ghazni the impregnable, the maiden fortress! You have doubtless heard of Mâhmûd my lord? how he rooted the unbelievers from the land, and how he planted the crescent throughout the bounds of the five rivers; and how, when he would not be bribed to spare the idol of Somnâth on the western coast, he was rewarded by the showers of precious stones that fell from the shattered head of the demon figure. Those were the days my lord; India was then a happy land, every Pathân was a gentleman, rode his stout horse, and was followed by his bold retainer: we are now poor adventurers, having to seek our bread in the most distant lands, in the farthest south, to be there enticed into service, cheated of our pay, and then not permitted to enforce our fair demands. Yes *Sâhib*, that English Government that you so justly stigmatize, is a strange medley of inconsistencies; old Shamsîer Khân, who returned the other day from Karnûl, tells me that there his people were clean cheated, and when they merely sat *dharna* (d) on their chief, and did not even offer violence to him, the English came down in great numbers, cut them up, and thought it was a very brave act. We too have suffered much at their hands; they slew the noble Rehmat Khân, and allowed the base Oudeans to usurp our possessions, and but the other day they spoiled Amir Khân (e) of his hard-earned conquests; but withal they are better than the Sikhs, whom I spit upon; the dogs, false, treacherous, cowardly dogs; no, they are not dogs, they are a cross

of the hog and the wolf ; are they not greedy and gluttonous with a dash of the Turkey-cock, loving display ?”

“Pooh, Chând Khân, moderate your wrath, you are talking nonsense, and I should not listen to such language; have you nothing of a different stamp to tell me? Do you know no good man among the chiefs? are none of the greybeards, those fine, venerable looking, old fellows, are none of them respectable?” “Truly I know none, my Lord, and if a good trait or an honest man is to be found among the bastard race, it is among the lower order, and the few who cultivate their own fields, instead of plundering their neighbours; but what could you expect when you think of who and what they were, even the best and bravest of them? shepherds, ploughmen and artisans were the most respectable, and they, to swell their ranks and add to the terror of their name, allied themselves with the miscreant, outlaws of all classes that the troubled times threw on the land; there’s an old adage my Lord, that put a *fakir* on horseback and he’ll ride to the devil, and what better was to be expected than that upstarts should be tyrants, and that hungry wretches, falling pell-mell into the rich granaries of their masters, should wallow deep in sensuality? I’ve often thought of all this, and tried to excuse them, my Lord, when I’ve come across a decent fellow with *Singh* to his name; but no, it would not do; I soon found he was a Lion but in name, an ass and owl at heart; or I found him more than corroborating my opinions of his own people—all shew—all talk—boasting and bragging—living on lies—trusting to their heels and to their wits, rather than on their swords and spears, sharp and long though they be. No Sahib; they are not Soldiers, they are well enough as robbers, they are hardy, but they cannot fight, and they won’t fight, and their *Râj* will crumble from their hands, more easily than it came to them, at the first appearance of an enemy.”

“You are really scurrilous, Chând Khân, and I’ll not allow you so to continue; tell me rather something of the nature of the country, its soil and produce, its divisions and peculiarities. Tell me any thing you know of these matters, but first inform me of the rise, course and outlet of the noble rivers that intersect and enrich the land, or rather might do so, for I observed little or no irrigation from them as I crossed the several ferries, and still less appearance of traffic was there on any one stream; tell me, how are the wood and the rice, and the ginger and the dyes, and the iron of the

hills, brought down to the plains? And by what means is an exchange of the produce of the different districts effected?"

"My Lord asks as many questions as the old Maharajah, and as fast—I'm not a *Saudagar*, *Sâhib*, but what little I do know is at my Master's service; small tho' his knowledge be, who loves better than a Pathân to diffuse it?" The rivers of the Panjâb, my Lord knows, are as the name indicates, five. The *Jhilam*, the *Chinâb*, the *Râvi*, the *Beyah* and the *Nai* or *Ghâra*, called by the *farangis* the *Sutluj*, which girdles it to the Southward. They are all of different natures, and run through countries of various soils; some are deep and rapid, others slow and tortuous; but all are, for hundreds of miles, navigable for boats of ordinary size. But who will build boats under such a Government? who trust his capital to such spoilers?"

"There you go again, *Chând Khân*, you prevent me from talking with you; I seek information, you always fall into abuse. *Hal rūhsat ast; Khoda nafir.*" Thus taken aback, my late *Vakil* made his *salâm* and, in a huff, retired.

I now endeavoured to my utmost to draw out the resources of my territory; my people confided in me, they had lately witnessed my ability to protect them, and had early noticed my desire to do so. I now began to reap the benefit of my early toils; *bazârs* rose up at *Kāngrâ*, and, had I burned with such ambition, I might even have called a large *ganj* after my own name, but I rather preferred that its owner should enjoy the honor and the profit of his own cash, and as each new trader, *Saukâr*, or petty *Baniya* came in with his tray of sweets, I accepted the *nazar*, cheered him with encouraging words, and, where possible, with more substantial aid, so that I soon drew the most wealthy men from *Jambû*, *Nûrpûr*, and other hill States, and the former city, which, in the troubled days of the Sikh rise, was a refuge to the commercial community of the plains, gave place in importance to *Kāngrâ*. In short, though I was not averse to feats of arms, and in my hotter youth had loved the battle-field, it was now more my ambition to build up a city of peace, an exception to the rule of those around me, and commemorate my name rather by preservation than destruction. But there were some few draw-backs; and as might be expected, I had to contend with petty interests and the arts of designing men, endeavouring to impose on me, and induce me to fur-

ther their ends in reward for what they were doing or might do in locating themselves and friends in my *bazārs*; an increasing portion of odium was also of course incurred from the neighbouring chiefs who considered me as a robber, stealing their fat geese, and though I told them they were welcome to entice all *Kāngrā* to their abodes; that I neither punished, mulcted, nor in any way attempted to deter seceders, or inveigle settlers; that, in short, I contented myself with letting things take their own course, protecting all, *actually within* my limits, and letting them know they must not look to me until they entered, or after they left my territory; that, unlike other *Sardars* who considered it a point of honour to shelter all settlers and to harbour, without question, the worst characters, or even ostentatiously to protect them, I openly set my face against such system, and proclaimed that I wanted no thieves, and would yield up to justice all offenders fairly convicted of heinous crimes in other states. And further, in attempting to put down theft, I strove hard to begin at the beginning, and to catch and punish the receivers, which proceeding caused great excitement, and affected the interests of some of the most *respectable* and well-to-do citizens, who, I found, openly sold the produce of other's plunder, and were not considered the worse for so doing; to break the neck of this system, I proclaimed that the receiver should be treated as the thief, and after warning being given, and a wealthy man convicted, I sent him round the town and territory for three successive days in irons, seated on an ass, and proclaimed that he was sentenced to work in irons for a specified time, and that all others so offending should be thus punished.

There were certain classes that I found lived on the vices of their neighbours, bearing a fair face to the world; they hired out robbers, taking the principal part of the booty when successful, and affording subsistence to their tools, when the times were hard on their calling; I found gangs of fellows united in the closest ties, with gradations of rank, faithful to each other; each having their part, some to enquire, others to effect the object desired, but the most skilful and oldest always to distract attention, and to turn the scent in wrong directions. The system of every *Sardār's Jagir*, or estates, being independent in its police relations, was a great help to such expert and experienced plunderers; and by hunting some of their crew to the neighbouring chiefs, and by paying their way

liberally, they could trace stolen property to any house or village, *but* the one to which it had been taken ; I endeavoured to procure the names of the leaders of these parties, to buy over some of them, and to play them against each other; had my stay at Kāngrā been prolonged, I had hopes of some success, but, as will appear, my schemes and my castle buildings were cut short, and sudden as had been my entrance on such various duties, more sudden was my temporary return to comparative leisure, and to the luxurious idleness of a military life.

"What do you think, Chānd Khān," one day I said, "of the foreign officers in the Maharajah's service? I ask you because you speak plainly, what is your estimate of their value to the Sovereignty of the Panjāb?" "Shall I speak freely, *Sāhib*? They are not your brethren you say, but you would eat with them and you dress alike, and hold the same creed; not indeed that I could ever understand what was the *farangi* religion; having no temples, saying no prayers, considering no time, people or food, sacred or impure."

"We differ more than you think, Chānd Khān; and *farangis*, as you call us, do worship God; but our religion tells us to do it in the heart and in our closets, not before men and in the market-places—it tells us more, that our conduct should be such that we may not fear the eye of man or God to be on us."

"*Sāhib*, such doctrine is good, but to be candid, I have seen little of such practice, and though I have seen foreigners fall into the customs, and join hand and heart in the tyrannies and vices of the Sikhs, I can recollect no instance, saving my master's presence, and always excepting him, of a *farangi*, objecting to any office or any duty, because it entailed on him work derogatory to his *izzat*; they have rather been foremost in offering where others have held back; and when you count their wealth, what they own, and what they nominally receive as pay, and then look to the style in which they live, you will perceive that they have at least quickly learnt the Sikh system of Government."

"And not the Musalmān, Chānd Khān."

"Oh yes, *Sāhib*, I know that we too had our day; but we would do better now if the reins of Government were in the hands of the faithful, and the worst of us in the worst times were angels compared to the locusts of to-day."

"I thought that General Aitavale at Vazirābād, and Mr.

Harland at Gujarāt, and General Ventura at Multan, were pattern men?"

"So it is the fashion to call them, but see if they don't chop off men's hands and feet, and hang up, with as little reason as the worst of the Sikhs: they have the advantage of administering districts naturally rich, (and you are aware that the general fertility of the Panjāb is a vulgar error); they have also the benefit, as foreigners, of being supposed by the people to be more protected by the court, and by the court to be supposed to be cared for by the British; at first sight this would be thought a small matter, but when it is considered how much value Ranjit Singh sets on the alliance, it may well be supposed that he keenly scans each link of the connecting chain; and, some how or other the foreigners have all managed to keep up communication with Ludiāna; Harland was once their nokar, and may be so still, and both Ventura and Allard affect intimacy with their magnates."

"But tell me how do they stand with the army, and the army with them?"

"The matter has been so managed as to afford them little influence; they have instructed regiments, which have been removed and replaced by others sent to be taught, and in like manner taken away; those employed on revenue duties have few or no troops with them, or the military Commandant is pretty much independent, and often has the virtual mastery, by the *tankhwāhs* he holds on the revenues, and the troops he has to enforce them."

"What do you think of the new system of discipline?"

"Why *Sahib*, I think, as do most others, that it's all fudge, well enough to look at, and for display, but useless beyond this; the Sikhs have never used it yet, and never will; if ever they are induced to charge, it will be in a tumultuary manner, and the straight parade-line system will be entirely forgotten or despised in the hour of action; they themselves say it will do for parade, but not for battle, you may therefore judge of what use all the drilling has been. But it has had one good effect, it has called attention to the state of the army, their arms and their physical appearance; and as the troops of their neighbours have always been worse found and numerically inferior, the Sikh power has

spread, but, in the Iron Battalions of the *farangis*, they will find other stuff, and the day that the two armies meet in the field, the Sikh *Raj* will end; their very discipline and conceit will ruin them; their affectation of equality will seal their destiny."

"Yes, I hear, that the English are highly disciplined and efficient troops."

"They are Lions, *Sahib*, each soldier is in himself a host, and their equipment and their guns are so unlike the tag rag and bob tail of our Maharajah's turn-out, that it is a pleasure to go to Ludiana to see them."

"You are certainly not an indulgent witness for our master; but don't repeat these opinions of yours, or say you favoured me with them."

"*Bu chashm, Khudawand*; your servant does not repeat, he holds sacred his master's thoughts."

"*Bahla*, Chand Khan, you have leave to retire for the present:" and I was again left to my cogitations as to whether he was a croaker, the Sikh Government, yet strong and vigorous, or tumbling to pieces and inviting destruction; "he is right in the main," was the conclusion I came to.

But I must now introduce my new *Faqir*, Sukan Lal, to notice, the more so, as he has a deal to say. His letter, after more than usual compliments, and telling me that I was a Sun among the stars, a brilliant lamp in a dark night, and so forth, ran thus: "Yes *Khudawand*, thy slave, though he cannot call himself an old servant, may with truth be ranked among the most faithful of well-wishers; and having been exalted to great dignity, he will endeavour to evince that he is not altogether unworthy; Light of a dark land, if the times are hard, every man is watching his neighbour, and no one knows whom to trust. The Maharajah's mind is confused, his usual placid demeanour is changed, and he looks troubled and care-worn. By day and by night the emissaries of my Lord's enemies are around him, they beset him at all hours, and respect not even his times of exercise and recreation. But yesterday it was that, riding with his *sacāri* in the neighbourhood of Shalimar garden, as we turned a corner, a troop of thirty or forty petitioners, attired as hill-men, suddenly wheeled round from the side of the road, and completely closed the passage of the train, throwing themselves on the ground, and rending the air with their cries for justice against the tyrant Bellasis, (meaning my lord.)

Other and more pointed expressions were used, but respect for my master forbid repetition. The Maharajah's *ghurcharas* and *bhays* affected to drive them away, but it was evident to thy servant that the whole was a prepared affair, and that the affected sympathy of the courtiers for the pretended oppressed *ra'iyats* was a mere trick to lead His Highness to mistrust my master. I loudly exclaimed so, or at least denied that any of the complainants were from Kāngrā, but, in the storm of voices, my words, I fear, fell unheard on the Maharajah's ears; redress was promised, and the Ruler of the Panjāb seemed troubled; he spoke not, but care was evidently at his heart, and, I fear, that evil will therefrom arise. Thy servant has already represented in what false colors Raja Sachet Singh painted his defeat to the *darbār*, and how he produced numerous evidences to show that, while in all peace and reliance on your hypocritical messages, he was watching in obedience to his orders, you had come down with an immense army (which you had been long and secretly collecting) and had certainly repelled him; but that his few troops, though sadly outnumbered, had caused great destruction in your ranks, and that he only wanted some reinforcements to wipe off the stain the royal banner had suffered.

"You are further said, my lord, to be in close intrigue with all the hill Rajas, and that even the chief of Little Tibet is a partner in the league against the Maharajah. His Highness is a wise man, and does not believe all he hears, but he seems staggered; and particularly during the last few days, his *mizāj* seems affected; the royal train was once ordered for a progress to Kāngrā, but, for some cause that I could not ascertain, it was countermanded. The game seems now to be to separate Lena Singh from your interests by offering him your post, and an expedition on a large scale into the hills is talked of, for the purpose of completing the subjection of the remaining Rajas, and bringing Kūlū, Mandi, and others to their senses; but, whatever be the ostensible object, Kāngrā will be the real game, and the Raja will so manage that His Highness shall not go, but that Gulāb Singh or Sachet Singh shall command the force.

"As may be expected, there is considerable excitement abroad, for it has been unusual of late for the Royal Army to meet with defeat, or for an Amil to oppose the *darbār's* orders; in the *bazars*

however, the real motive of my Lord's resistance is pretty fairly understood, and the moneyed men always end by wishing Amritsir and Lahaur had each such a ruler as Kāngrā. My Lord shall soon again hear ; his servant is vigilant ; this petition already exceeds the bounds of respect."

The same post brought a *paricāna* with the seal of Faqir Azizudin, it was brief and caustic, disapproving of my harbouring convicted felons, desiring me to yield them up to justice without further demur, and myself to proceed at once to Lahaur, or that measures would be taken to enforce obedience. With the above order came no note of compliment from the *faqir*, as was his habit to send me, and it was clear that he had either been gained by the Raja, or that fear restrained him from his former friendly offices.

There was more truth in the rumour of a hill confederacy than, at the time, I was even myself aware of, but it will not do to bring in the important events now at hand, at the tail of a chapter ; a new one must be devoted to show what my several neighbours were doing, while I was brushing up my arms, seeing that every article of store was in abundance and in its proper place.

During this time, I more than ever sought to make myself acquainted with the affairs and condition of the Panjab generally, for I saw that the tide was setting against me, and felt that I could not long remain at Kāngra ; I studied also the characters of my followers, and by familiar and kindly conversation sought to gain their confidence ; I found the system but partially answer, and have indeed throughout my career, found no more difficult point to attain, than to combine, so much of strictness as should prevent my people imposing on me, with that forbearance that should attach them to my person, which, while it convinced them I was ready to meet all their real wants, and to a certain extent their desires, should make them feel I was not to be made a tool of, and would invariably punish all attempts to impose on my indulgence, for I felt that what was *parivart* for the time to the individual, was possibly ruin to him in the end, and certainly misery and oppression to those within his controul : consistent, therefore, and firm demeanour was my aim, with whatever success it was carried out. Orientals indeed are strange and fanciful creatures, the same man that would watch your sick bed untired for nights, or expose him-

self to destruction on your behalf, would cheat you, pilfer you, lie to you, and daily and hourly neglect your orders; the true philosophy then is to cultivate their better qualities and make the best of their defects; treating them with what indulgence is possible, respecting their religious prejudices, but, at the same time, obliging them to respect yours, and not to treat you as if you were an unclean animal, keeping them strictly to their duty, even though it be a matter of routine; mindful that though false alarms may deaden vigilance, dishabitude does so, much more certainly, and that what men are not taught in ordinary times to do as a matter of course, they may, in time of need, look on as a hardship.

But I've lectured too long, and must return to more stirring matter.

NOTES.

(a) Every petty chief exercises judicial powers in his own territory even to taking life; the government is rarely troubled with a reference, except in cases of treason, infringement of the border, or offences committed by one state against another.

(b) A portion of the system mentioned in the preceding note, which gives, tacitly at least, to every Sardar, police jurisdiction in his own lands. Mutilation, as stated in the body of the work, is the common punishment in cases that do not meet a capital sentence.

(c) There is much room for improvement in the British jails; wherever subordinate officers of any nation or colour, but especially in India, are not diligently superintended, abuses will follow, despite the most rigid laws and regulations. No edicts will supply the place of vigilant, personal inspection by the British functionary; and the "jack-of-all-trades sort of work, expected from a civilian, does not favor this needful attention.

(d) The good old fashion of Brāhmins and others sitting *dharna* at their neighbours doors, and there fasting or threatening violently to destroy themselves, is falling into disuse in British India. There are various sorts of *dharna*, but the object of the act always is, to bring the guilt of the victim's blood on the enemy or oppressor; and with the same motive does the *chūrī-mār* (*vide ch. iii. p.*) wound himself. "Cutting off the nose to vex the face," is a marvelously common practice: I once saw a poor, half-witted creature, who fancied the magistrate would not render him justice, approach that functionary, put a petition into his hand, and, without leaving a moment for him to open the paper, rush into a well close by, at least thirty feet deep. Fortunately he was only bruised, and was glad to catch the rope that was let down to draw him out. The *Pathān dharna* is generally of a more intelligible kind, and directed to the injury of the defendant instead of the plaintiff, the troops of Amir Khan, (already mentioned in the notes to *ch. i.*) more than once put him to the question.

(e) I wonder Bellasis allowed the little Mûltāni to talk after this fashion ; for the real state of the case the reader is referred to notes on ch. 1st above referred to. Perhaps, however, Chānd Khān meant that Amir Khān was deprived of a respectable and lucrative possession when his marauding propensities were restricted.

(f) A scene like that here described occurred either to Lord Auckland or his predecessor.

(g) The Sikhs are very jealous of *ra'iyats* or others leaving their lands and settling elsewhere ; and on the other hand hold it a point of honor not to give up even notorious offenders who take refuge with them. The rules proposed by Bellasis regarding thieves, settlers, and others, have, to my knowledge, been attempted, and with some success.

(h) I believe, for every practical purpose ; and the zealous and able officer who lately served in the Sikh army against the Eusafzais is convinced of the absurdity of attempting to enforce European discipline in the field.

CHAPTER NINTH.

CONTENTS.

"A class of history which the reader may read or not, as he pleases."

"The martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or Kingdoms."

Wordsworth.

The current of my story has been a good deal clogged by feeling that in the Panjāb I am, to many of my readers, treading on a perfect "terra incognita;" as my object is, therefore, to edify as well as amuse, to be intelligible, as well as interesting, I will even venture to give another half chapter of downright history, straightforward matter of facts, as far as I know. But, gentle reader of these unworthy adventures, you who read to learn, you who read to idle, and you who read to scoff, you are all right, all wrong, as in most questions are both parties to a degree; though my tale be not a veritable history, it need not therefore be all fiction: although it is neither romance nor novel, it is not therefore all fact, but as before noticed it is grounded on reality, and even if the pictures are failures, each individual sketched has sat for his likeness, and the nation at large has been before me from which to draw, and to lead those who peruse my pages into some acquaintance with what has been, what may be, and what are the moral and physical features of the Panjāb.

I left off in my historical outline with the partial consolidation of the Sikh confederacy on the death of Ahmad Shah (a); some notice was also given of the condition of the people and the relative proportions of Sikh, Hindu and Musalmān, and an estimate of their military force, which was entirely, I may say, the creature of Ranjit Singh's genius; if after all it can be called ability and foresight

to throw aside the weapon that won him his laurels in order to try one that cuts both ways, and in the use of which he was inexperienced. I am inclined to consider that the Maharajah would have shewn more foresight if he had devoted the same attention that he did to European tactics, to rendering his troops really efficient after their own fashion; if he had erected fortifications around Lahaur and Amritsir on European models, and there planted his guns, encumbering his troops in the field with but a few and perfectly equipped light artillery; he had models near at hand, and even furnished him by the British; but oriental penuriousness prevented his doing the thing properly. "It sounds well to talk of a hundred guns; yes, a hundred halfequipped (*b*) are surely better than twenty-five in better style." So reasoned the King, and his courtiers told him all he did was right; and thus, while he affected to be able to bring sixty guns into the field, he could not really, after one day's march, have manœuvred with twenty; every troop has its gun-carriage agency, and every *Sardar* in charge of guns makes very much what arrangements seem to him best, and although each gun has eight horses attached, and is, according to their notions, well looked to, the waggons and tumbrils are left to the tender mercies of horned cattle. Can any one conceive a greater absurdity? Is it not like tying up one leg of a man going to run a race? but so it is, and a very good sample it offers of the *bandobust* of the military establishment; eight horses, I was told, were put into the gun traces, as the country was generally heavy and roads bad, but when I asked, "why not horse your tumbrils too?" the reply was, "bullocks do for them, or in case of need, we can pack the ammunition on camels." The horses, throughout the service, both in cavalry and artillery, are undersized, and wanting weight either for a charge or for efficiency in draught, and when it is considered that many of the *sawārs*, supplied by the *Jāgirdārs*, are six and eight anna men, it may be conceived how ill mounted they must be, and how poorly fed the cattle; for the British, I believe, give twelve annas a day to their Irregulars, and yet have a difficulty in securing their efficiency. The infantry, then, of the Panjāb is their standby, as *regular* troops, but as to how much *they* are to be relied on, I have already given my opinion, and having seen a good deal of their *Sardārs* and commandants, the only wonder to me is, how they achieve such good stage effect

on parade, and how, with so much want of regimental domestic economy, their *paltans* held together for a day. There is no such thing as regular pensions for wounds to individuals, or reward to their families for falling in the service; a disabled soldier is permitted to hang on, to sit in his lines and draw his pay, or part of it; when he dies, there is an end of him and his claims. Furloughs are given for two months of the year, generally in the rainy season; during these months the troops receive full pay, though the system of Dost Muhammed and others was to calculate the year as having ten months, and to pay only for so many, considering the men as defunct or in a state of hibernation during the rest of the year. But to my historical sketch.

Ahmad Shah cannot be said to have ever held the sovereignty of the Panjāb; through his Lieutenants he ruled Kashmir, Multan and Sirhind, but the proper country of the Panjab was never for any continued period under his control; more than once the Afghān Governor of Lahaur was restricted to the bounds of his capital, and it was only by repeated incursions, and by the terror his personal prowess always carried with it, that the Abdālli Monarch continued to keep a footing south-east of the Atak. In 1773 Ahmad Shah died of a cancer in his face, and was succeeded by his son, whom, as Prince Timur, the Sikhs had already driven from Amritsar; he was of a different temperament from his father, and was content with his western possessions, and unwilling to continue the struggle with the wild and daring Sikh leaders, then rising into notice. During his reign therefore of twenty years, the land was nearly at peace, and would have been entirely so, had the Sikhs been content to leave unmolested Multan, Mankera and the other Pathan possessions.

It was during the early days of the Sikh temporal fortunes that the family of Ranjit Singh first came into notice.

Desoo, a Jāt cultivator and owner of three ploughs and one well (c), is the first of the family noted in Sikhannals; his son, Nodh Singh, married the daughter of Gulāb Singh, a Zamindār of Majethia, who had taken the *pahā* (d), and persuaded his son-in-law to do so too. Nodh Singh, therefore, on his marriage, forsook his peaceful occupations and joined as a trooper the *misal* of Kapṭir Singh of Gujarāt, called the Fyzoolapureea *misal*; he died in 1750, leaving three sons, when the eldest, Charat Singh, joining

with his brothers Dul and Jodh Singh, raised a banner of their own, and from being mere Dhārwees or highwaymen, they soon established a *derah* or camp of their own, and emulated the proudest.

The wife of Charat Singh was from Gujraoli, a small village not far north of Lahaur, where, through her influence, he gained permission to build a small mud fort as a stronghold for his family, and the plunder acquired in his expeditions.

The vicinity of Gujraoli to Lahaur was an eye-sore to the Affghan Governor, who, hiring the services of a band of Sikhs, moved out to destroy the rising fortress; his allies forsook him and he was defeated and scarcely escaped; this action was the main cause of bringing down Ahmad Shāh's prowess on the Sikhs in 1762, when he so signally defeated them near Sirhind in the action, called by the Sikhs the Ghuloo Gora, or bloody field, the losses of which day, they so well revenged the following year when they slew Zyn Khan the Governor, and sacked Sirhind, leaving it to this day a ruin. (c)

At this time the Sikh confederacy was divided into twelve *misals* or brotherhoods, the leaders were universally men of low birth, jāt cultivators, shepherds, or artizans; but they were stirring fellows, and each had won his way from small beginnings to the head of swarms of marauding horsemen. The leaders were followed by their relations and personal friends, and of course, the greater was the success of each, the more numerous became his band.

The affectation of equality was not restricted to the *Sardars*, but each horseman in his own allotment considered himself as an independent functionary, if not Prince: he was tied to his chief by the bond of mutual self-interest, as long as he remained in that service; if displeased, he changed his banner, and found many ready to welcome him.

The *Sardār's* duty was to lead in war, to arbitrate in peace; his allotment of all conquests was made by general acclamation, in proportion to his supposed merits and the means he had personally brought to bear; the subdivisions were then made. The leader was treated with a certain respect, which again much depended on his personal character, and no one considered himself bound by any law, but his own pleasure, to look to or regard the head of his community; some of the chiefs are said to have been able to muster ten or twelve thousand horse, and their combined strength to have

ing for ten years administered with great ability and prudence his territory independent of his mother, whom he put to death for intriguing with a *Brahmān*, as did Ranjit Singh his mother for similar conduct with his minister Lakhpat Singh.

Ranjit Singh was only twelve years old when he succeeded his father Maha Singh; for five years his mother-in-law Sada Kanwar, who was now head of Jai Singh's Misal, governed in his name, and, in concert with his mother and the paramour of the latter lady, managed the affairs of her son-in-law's territory; but in 1793, being then seventeen years of age, Ranjit put his mother to death, got rid of Lakhpat Singh, and assumed the management of his own affairs, for many years, however still much guided and aided by the able counsels of Sada Kanwar. During the years 1796 and 1797, Shāh Zāmān, the blind, old ex-monarch of Kābul, now residing at Lūdhiana, who had then lately succeeded his father Taimur, twice invaded the Panjāb and even entered Lahāur; but it was never the policy of Ranjit to oppose himself to equal numbers, or indeed to the chance of reverse; he early went on the principle of avoiding all risk, and though by no means wanting in personal courage, he looked closely to the policy of all his acts, to the probable result—the cost and the gain: the sheep skin caps of Ahmad Shāh (☞) were therefore still remembered, and Ranjit deemed it more prudent to leave the field of the Panjāb for the invader, and to try his own fortunes beyond the Suteluj. While, therefore, Shāh Zāmān was acquiring a temporary hold of Lahāur and its neighbourhood, Ranjit was gaining permanent conquests in the still weak and unsettled neighbourhood of the Suteluj and Jamna; and on the Shāh evacuating Lahaur, and leaving it to the mercies of the three debauched *Sardārs*, Chāt Singh, Mohur Singh, and Sāhib Singh, it struck Ranjit Singh that he would gain possession of it himself; he did so with but little difficulty, and actually had the skill to gain a *sanad* for its occupancy from the Affghān monarch.

Now holding the ancient seat of Government, and strengthened by his lately acquired conquests, he already assumed supremacy; and, though fiercely opposed by his old enemies the Bhanghis, and also by the Pathāns of Kussoor, and his uncle, Sāhib Singh of Gujarāt, he daily acquired new strength, making each day's work help in the business of to-morrow, and soon obliged the Kus-

soorians to pay tribute, and entirely put out the light of the Banghis.

The Chiefs of the different *misals* now began to fear each for himself, and seeing every day bringing new actions, seizures and forfeitures, they attempted to unite and protect themselves, but the Maharajah was already too strong for them, and under Sada Kanwar, having the whole strength of the Ghunnees on his side, and having exchanged turbans with Fateh Singh, Aloowala, and broken up his chief enemies, he was now beyond the reach of successful attack.

Ranjit was already paving his way for his conquests in the hills; as auxiliaries and as friends to one or other of the mountain chiefs, the Sikhs were now well acquainted with the mountain regions, with what was worth taking and the way to get at it; Sansar Chand, by his inroads into the plains, brought destruction to himself; and most of the others, by their own feuds, hastened their ruin.

The dissensions among the sons of Taimur now prevented further danger of Abdali invasion, but rather left to the mercy of the Sikh the possessions of Menkera, Pashawar, Multan, &c. to the seizure of which the new monarch early turned his attention. But nearer and more pressing objects detained him from immediate execution of his plans. In 1807 he took Kusoor, and the next year again moved across the Suteluj, and was only stopped in a wide sweep of conquest by the British Commissioner, Mr. Metcalfe; the Maharajah weighed well the course he should take (*y*), but being offered very liberal terms, no less than a guarantee of all his possessions acquired up to the beginning of the discussions then pending, and seeing with his own eyes that the British, though few, were superbly equipped, that they were fresh from a long tide of victory and despised his mere bands of predatory horsemen; having also the great Holkar a refugee in his camp as a specimen of the prowess of the English; he took the wise course of binding himself by treaty to respect the present boundary and in no way to molest the Nishanwala, Shahid and Phoolkea Misals which had placed themselves under the British protection.

By this treaty, Ranjit Singh was guaranteed in the property of more than twelve lakhs of rupees of possessions on the left bank of the Suteluj, a country, by its extent and position along the banks of

a great river, capable of producing ten times the then revenue; it has, however, little profited by the long interval of peace, and though external war has ceased its periodical visits, internal feuds, unadjusted rights, insecurity of every thing most dear, and the absence of any one interested in upholding a better system, have kept the banks of the Suteluj in a state of comparative desolation. The tribes inhabiting them, bound by no natural ties to their Sikh Rulers, and discovering nothing to respect in them, and indeed being accustomed to see the despot of to-day a fleeced and houseless wretch to-morrow, have attended little to the cultivation of their soil, but have preferred the more idle occupation of tending cattle. Thus every village has its herds; they wander and graze almost at large, trespassing even on the states of other chiefs, until some petty cause of offence arise, and then commences a long series of affrays, assaults, seizures and reprisals, until such a state has arisen that no chiefship but has its blood-feud with every village or petty state around it, causing a frightful condition of insecurity, and rendering unsafe the movements of the most peaceful member of a community, he being liable to seizure in retaliation for some offence, real or imaginary, of another individual subject of the same state. A similar system very much obtains throughout the Panjáb, except that the trans-Suteluj possessions are further from the seat of Government, and that there is a delicacy on the part of the Maharajah to move troops in that quarter, that the people know this, and hardly consider themselves as subjects thereby rendering more clogged the, at no time very smooth, wheels of Government.

The treaty with the English had, in a measure, quieted Ranjit Singh's mind; for, although for a time suspicious as well as angry, he could not but admire and respect the Government that gained conquests and acquired possessions only to give them away to people having no manner of claim on them, and when he saw that the Pattiala, Jindh, Nabha, Khytul, and other chiefs were not only treated with all respect and consideration, but that they were neither mulcted, nor in any way called upon even to pay a share of the common expence of keeping up the general government, that neither fines nor *nazars* were taken or demanded from heirs, nor loans exacted (A) by the English in their necessities, he could not but then believe that such a government was really in earnest in its as-

sections that the peace of the frontier was their only object, and the well being of the Sikh people their single desire. And when, not long since, the Aloowala, Mundot and other smaller chiefs threw off the Lahaur yoke(i) and vainly courted British aid, the Maharajah had another proof of the justness of the opinion he had first formed, in the face of the counsels of his *Sardārs* and other advisers.

In 1809, by a stratagem, he acquired the mountain fastness of Kangra; in 1810, he besieged Mūltān, but was bought off by the Governor, now left to his own resources by the Afghan Monarch; in 1812 he took the hill fortresses of Bhembar and Rajaoree and the territory attached, and the next year, by a bribe of a lakh of rupees to the Governor, gained possession of the fort of Atak, commanding thereby the passage of the Indus. In 1814 he signally failed in an attempt on Kāshmir, and entered on no further aggression on a large scale until 1818, when, after much preparation, and after having himself gone down the Indus and paved the way by bribing, soothing or bullying the petty chiefs, and either preventing their uniting in the defence of Mūltān, or causing them to join in its attack, he again set himself down before it, and after a sharp, though not very long defence, he gained possession of the ancient city of Multan, slaying the Governor Nawab Muzaffar Khan and several of his sons in the breach. A fanatic *Ākālī* is said to have been the main instrument in the capture; mad with opium, he threw himself into the breach, and followed by a forlorn hope of such like material, cut his way through the astonished and degenerate moslems, who had of late years preferred the absurd attempt at relieving themselves from their Sikh enemies by buying them off instead of expending the same money in entertaining troops and strengthening their defences; so much quicker was the Maharaja in this instance than was expected, that while the neighbouring Chiefs of Monkera and Bahawalpur were concerting to aid the City, he took it, having actually in his camp a small contingent of the *Dāudpūtras* whose hearts were with their Musalmān brethren in the town; in like manner, the *Pathans* of Kasoor, lately brought beneath the yoke, were obliged to lend their unwilling aid to subject another *Pathan* state. The plunder of Multan was great, and reported greater; and such was now the Maharaja's power that he ventured to rob his soldiers of their

acquired booty. The only other instance of such an act on record, is that of Nâdir Shâh, which at the time, nearly, and perhaps did eventually, cost him his life; but for Ranjit Singh, in the face of the system of Sikh brotherhood to laugh not only at the rule of every man being entitled to his *psta,i(k)* but actually to take from the troops the hard cash in their possession, was doing what none but a very bold man dared to do, at such a time and with such a people.

Mûltân paved the way for the conquest of Peshâwar and Kashmir, both of which Provinces fell to the same arts that the Panjâb had done; in 1823 for the last time the Sikhs and Afghans met in a pitched battle at Noushera, where Ranjit Singh's personal bravery and that of his *Akalis* (whom he freely expended in such engagements) chiefly conduced to the success of the day; the tide of conquest had already been turned backwards, and this was the last attempt of any consequence by the Afghân crown, or rather Chiefs, for there had been so many kings and so many aspirants for power that the energies of the nation were expended in its own destruction. In 1827 Syud Ahmed's religious war had disturbed the *Darbâr*, and the fanatic having obtained a footing in the Yusufzye country, and being warmly supported by the wild and warlike tribes of that strong region, alarmed Ranjit Singh much; but, about the time I went to Kangra, the Syud was slain, and his followers dispersed by a force under Kunwar Sher Singh, who thereby gained great credit at Court and some eclât with the Army. The Syud had actually acquired possession of Peshâwar and chiefly lost the good will of his supporters by over-strictness, as to religious ceremonies, as well as by touching their pockets to aid his military enterprizes.

I have thus faintly sketched the Sikh progress up to the time I joined the ranks of its Army, and have thereby shewn that, contrary to the general supposition, there has been but little fighting in the Panjab for many years; that most of the acquisitions were gained by diplomacy, and that the Sikh valour can scarcely be said to have been yet tried, and that to hold their own they will have to put forth more manhood than they have yet required to do. I have already, in a former Chapter, stated the strength and condition, of the army when I joined, at which time the revenue that came into the public treasury was a crore

and a half yearly, nearly as much being the portion of the *Sardars* and proceeds of their *Jaghirs*.

Faint as is the outline here given, much of it is taken from Prinsep's narrative, the contents of which I have reason to believe to be accurate and the delineations of Sikh character, as depicted by the late Captain Murray to have been very correct; the only credit, therefore, I aspire to is for clearly condensing the information collected by that officer, which in very few instances needs to be corrected by after enquirers, indeed were all the British Agents as diligent and desirous after the truth as he was, India would be a well known country.

But I may have tired my reader's patience too much, and trapped him into disquisitions which, however, as he is not obliged to read, he has no reason to complain of; and now I will return to Kote Kāngrā, even though I have other matters to write of; but a frightful catastrophe that at this time took place, almost under my eyes, demands notice in the first instance.

Chānd Khān and his late jailer were in open arrest under the care of Aliverdi Khān; unless to come to myself they had no permission to leave the Multāni lines. Breathless with haste and terror, Aliverdi Khān rushed into my presence, the morning after my late conversation with Chānd Khān, exclaiming "*Sahib*, he's dead!" "Who is dead, man?" "Chānd Khān, *Sahib*!" "Chānd Khān," echoed I—"tell me how and when? poor fellow! and is he really dead?" Pulling on my upper garment, I rushed out with the Multāni, and on entering the enclosed area, one of the outside rooms of which had been occupied by Chānd Khān, I found my faithful follower lying on the ground weltering in his blood; his head was nearly severed from the body, there was also a deep gash in his side, and two of his fingers were hanging from the right hand suspended by the mere skin. By a cut on the *chārpāt* on which the unfortunate man had lain, it appeared he had been attacked when asleep, and by the wounds on his fingers he must have attempted defence, seized the sword and tried to wrest it from his murderer's hands. With a heavy heart I returned home after having made all possible enquiries to enable me to get a clue to the bloody deed; three persons appeared to have been engaged and to have performed their work leisurely and coolly; the old Sikh jailer was missing, and, of course, all attributed

for a short time very violently on the *maidan* in front of his residence. On his return, he replied to the proposal, by expressing his astonishment at the impudent assurance of the British Government in making it. The English, he said, had refused to receive the independent Sikh States under their protection, which had some time before been solicited, and now that he, not being so scrupulous, had, at a great expense of blood and treasure extended his power over them, the English very coolly tell him to turn out, and make over charge to them ! He wished to know what kind of friendship this was ? Sir Charles could not deny the justice of the Maharajah's argument, but very judiciously urged the policy and expediency of yielding a point that would make the British Government his firm and lasting friend ; and reminded the King that, being secure in this quarter, he might be at liberty to extend his conquests in more profitable directions. His Highness took the hint, conceded all that was required of him, and, to the latest day of his life, expressed his obligation of the suggestion, assuring Sir Charles Metcalfe on every occasion that presented itself, of his grateful remembrance of the good advice he had given.

(h) Loans have two or three times been taken from the Patiala and Naba Chiefs, who, with great astonishment, found that the Company repaid the full amount, with interest.

(i) In the last note but one, the fact is referred to, that the Chiefs mentioned in the text, sought admission within the British pale, which was refused, tho' that Government used its influence to obtain terms for them with their own Chief.

(k) Equality among the Sardars was, as has been stated, a fundamental law of Sikh policy, and was observed, much as other laws enacting equality have ever been.

CHAPTER TENTH.

CONTENTS.

The plot thickens.

“ At once there rose so wild a yell,
 Within that dark and narrow dell,
 As all the fiends from heaven that fell
 Had pealed the banner-cry of hell.
 Forth from the pass, in the tumult driven,
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,

The archery appear :

For life ! for life ! their fight they ply,
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry
 And broadswords flashing to the sky,
 Are maddening in the rear !”

“ We'll quell the savage mountaineer
 As their *Tischel* cows the game !
 They come as fleet as mountain deer,
 We'll drive them back as tame !”

Scott.

Chand Khan's death came on me so suddenly, amidst so many troubles, that I was quite bewildered ; his Multāni squad were, I saw, by no means satisfied with the part I had taken in regard to their leader on his return from Lahaur ; and, as was natural for rude minds, could not understand how I should treat a servant whom I trusted and liked, as I had done Chand Khan, nor could they forget that their friend was a prisoner when he met his death.

I could appreciate the men's feelings, and, therefore, regarded not their glances, but exerted myself as if I had been their comrade to trace out the villains ; a sword and a shoe had been left behind, both were common coarse articles, made by village workmen, and it was my great object to find the manufacturers ; all my endeavours however failed, and it was long before the truth was revealed and another depth of Sikh character fathomed.

How much I now missed my *Vakil*! His careless, easy manner, so unlike any other native of my acquaintance, had drawn me towards him, for, whatever may have been the value of his harangues and opinions, they had an earnestness and a devil-may-care about them; that was very attractive to one like myself, who had so long dwelt among men measuring their words, and watching the listener's eye to judge of the effect of the first sentence before a second should be permitted to issue from their lips, who could never give an answer without considering why the question was put, and if it meant "more than met the ear." Musalmān, Hindu, and Sikh, almost all of my acquaintances during my not long, but very busy career having been of such stamp, I could not but appreciate Chānd Khān, and in his company felt as if with a European intimate. To replace such a man was no easy matter, and seldom was a bold and wise counsellor more needed than just now at Kāngrā, for without were enemies thickening, and within friends and followers were wavering.

Taking Aliverdi Khān aside one day, I remarked to him, as if casually, that he and his comrades appeared to be tired of my service, that if so, the road was open, they should have a free passage to their homes, be paid up to the last *course*, and receive certificates of conduct. "Has your *fidwi* given offence, is my Lord displeased?" was the reply; "By no means, Aliverdi, I do not usually disguise my thoughts, nor do I offer *chits*, when I have reason to complain of my servants; the case is as I've stated, you seem to have something at your hearts, and I would not be served by unwilling hands." "*Khodawand*, shall your *fidwi* speak." "By all means, friend, speak out." "My Lord is angry, and distrusts his servants, but believe me *Sahib*, we would die for you; true it is that we are grieved at the dog's death that our brave and open-friend and *Sardar* has met. We are down-hearted on his account, and, pardon me my Lord, we think that, considering his zeal and his services, Chānd Khān was but ill rewarded." Aliverdi was a favourite, and one who had not taken on, from the partiality shewn him, I therefore explained to him how impossible it was I could have acted differently towards the unfortunate deceased; "But no man," repeated I, "more laments his death, or will go further to avenge it." "And so I have said my Lord," rejoined the *Pathan*; "there are odd fellows among us, and some of them are wil-

ful and suspicious; but I've reminded them how you have treated us from the beginning, and how you have exerted yourself since Chand Khan's death." The result of this conversation was an alteration in the demeanour of my men, whom I now found doubly alert and anxious to wipe away from my memory this temporary suspicion.

At this time I received a *parwānah* to the effect, that I was to produce Chand Khan at Lahaur, dead or alive; that failing to do so, I should be made personally responsible. "Short and sweet exclaimed I;" they are coming to it in earnest now; they'll have me out of Kangra, but the Maharajah must come himself, for he'll find that he has one obedient servant; one officer who respects his orders."

How I came to be Governor of Kangra often puzzled me, and how I, a stranger and a foreigner, was trusted as supreme in so strong a hold, when the system of the government was to suspect all its servants, and in the pettiest forts to put more than one authority, or sometimes as many as three or four *thanadars* to watch and check each other. The conclusion I came to, was an unusual one for the Panjāb, that having been much favoured, I was bound to be very honest!

My position in all its bearings I explained to Mahtab Kowr, she advised, nay conjured me to fly, but I could not take such a step without subjecting myself to suspicion, and giving a triumph to my enemies; I however converted the little money I had amassed, being about two thousand pounds sterling, into gold, and bills on *Shroffs* in the British territory, and I always carried about my person £500 worth of gold in ducats and in thin plates. In my travels through many countries I had been accustomed thus to load myself, by secreting my cash about my person, generally in a belt round my waist; but in times of danger in more unsuspected places; just now I could not but feel that every day might be my last at Kangra, and indeed with so much to contend against, I should have yielded to the storm had not my pride forbidden, and had I not had a dearer object than self to care for. Marriage is thought by some to incapacitate a man for the duty of a soldier (a), and to deteriorate him for all active business; my own experience contradicts the opinion: an active man will be active, and a sluggard, slothful, be he either benedict or bachelor: nor would any

woman, worthy of the name of wife, think of interfering with what regards the credit of her husband, unless to urge him onward, to cheer him by her counsel on departure and in absence, and to brighten his home to him on his return ; such is the part of that wife whose husband makes her the partner of his heart, of his cares and his joys.

The young and innocent mind of Mahtab was fast maturing : my visits to herself and mother, though still unfrequent, were employed in directing her attention to such studies as would unfold her understanding and gradually enable her to see the puerility of the religion of her country, and prepare her for the reception of Christian truths : she had already the best preparation, in a teachable spirit, a loving and a confiding disposition, and what will not woman believe, when taught by the one she loves ?

Many attempts had been lately made to draw me into contumacy ; not only, as I've said, were those about me desirous to do so, but, as before hinted, my neighbours the hill Chiefs and Rajahs, induced by the fame of my repulse of Sachet Singh, desired my alliance, some to shake off the Sikh yoke, others to avoid its expected approach ; but I steadily, though civilly, declined all such offers, and said that if again made I should be obliged to refer their propositions to Lahaur.

Kangra was wanted as a position : it was therefore less myself than my strong-hold that the confederates were anxious to obtain ; and failing to induce me to join the league, a scheme was set on foot to surprize my fortress.

I had for sometime been in possession of vague and indefinite reports as to their intentions ; but giving them no credit, I was too incautious ; when one evening that I had retired earlier than usual, who should steal quietly into my chamber but Gulabi, and, before I was well asleep, roused me into perfect attention by her more than usually wild and energetic manner. "*Sahib*," said she "lie still, but listen ; it is no ordinary news that has induced your *loundee* to intrude on your privacy ; I'm but this moment returned from the mountain side, where, accidentally, I overheard a conversation that made my very hair stand on end ; it was thus my Lord ; yesterday evening I returned from the day's rambles, and, as usual in these my excursions, I took shelter in the shade of a friendly rock. I had scarcely eaten my solitary meal, when I

was startled by the arrival of a party of three men, who took up their abode for the night within a few feet of me ; one ledge of rock only separated us, and, terrified, I thought of flight, when the mention of my Lord's name restrained me ; I stopped, and holding my very breath with terror, I heard the details of a scheme for the surprise of Kangra, and the death of my benefactor. The party to whose words I was listening had just returned from Kangra ; the men compared notes, and appeared to have closely inspected the works, and talked of their friends within the garrison as securing to them success, and placing beyond doubt the object of their designs ; names were mentioned, but I was unable to distinguish them ; Khans, however, as well as Singhs, appear implicated, and it behoves the noble Bellasis to be up and stirring if he would hold his fortress."

The poor *Kanchani* spoke so far pretty coherently, and then in a wilder and quicker strain, continued, "wretch that I am ! what have I done ? Those tones, those accents are not new to me, they awaken a flood of memory of some distant, some happier time ; but where and when I know not ; no, it must be but a dream," and she drew her hand tightly across her brow, and continued, "who was ever kind to the poor *Kanchani*, but Bellasis Sahib, and the house of Kangra ? and in requiting them both, she may now die contented."

I questioned her, and perceived that there was no exaggeration or discrepancy in her report, but that the contingents of the confederates, forming a junction in a valley just without the bounds of the Kangra territory, were, by a long night march, to appear before my fortress before break of day on the fourth morning from the present, that false alarms of escalades were to be made on several points, and that traitors within my camp were to seize myself and some of my chief confidants, and to open the gates to the enemy.

The names of my treacherous inmates having escaped Gulabi, was unfortunate, but about some I could not be mistaken ; so dismissing her and instantly arising, I called to my counsels, my new *Naiib* and Aliverdi Khan, and told them so much of what I had heard as was necessary for them to hear ; I then desired that Shamsheer Khan, Pattal Singh and Hardyal Singh should be forth-

with seized and separately confined, and no one from any of their dwellings should be permitted, on any account, to leave the precincts of their habitations. Chains of sentinels, and videttes beyond them, were thrown out all round Kangra, with strict orders on no pretence to allow any individual to pass from within, and to apprehend or slay all making the attempt.

There was a defile of half a mile in length within four miles of Kangra; through this the confederates must pass, it was in no part fifty yards across, and so narrow in some places, that from the towering precipices on either side, parties could keep up a conversation. This defile was, as it were, the last long step in the descent from the last range of mountains into the plain; it was a branch from the valley of the river, from which it ascended gradually for a quarter of a mile; it then, for another quarter, continued to be little but a succession of precipices; the path seldom admitting of more than a single person at a time; huge rocks and boulders lay around, and over head still huger masses were suspended, requiring but a finger's touch to close the path entirely. Surmounting this narrow staircase, the plain and detached rock of Kangra lay before the bold and active intruder. Oft had I threaded "the dell of death," and, returning with my fishing rod from the Ban Ganga, have scrambled up and over its rugged path, and turned in my mind how a score of bold hearts might there stop a host. Oh, if I can now but keep my counsel, how I will dispose of these rude hill-men! mused I.

A party of my trustiest men, I detached to lurk at the opening of the pass from the plains; they were to secrete themselves, and on no account to allow travellers or others to leave or enter the defile; but, apprehending all comers to bring them before me.

These my plans were all arranged before day dawned, when I started with half-a-dozen followers, all of us clad as hill-men, and carrying nothing that at a distance could lead us to be taken for more than ordinary Rajpoot shepherds.

The ground, as I have said, was well known to me, but now I scanned every inch of it as if I had never been there before; the last ascent wanted but a little scarping to be made quite impassable; this, in a few hours, I caused to be done, and selected a spot that commanded most points of the last hundred yards, where, under the shade of a huge rock, I resolved to place two large swi-

vels; the overhanging rock formed a natural embrasure, and behind it the Juzzael men and Topejees could work away, almost unseen and at any rate untouched, unless by a stray shot, while none could approach the crest of the defile without running the gauntlet of their deadly fire. At other points on the farthest approach, I prepared similar posts, leaving paths of retreat to those most advanced, and giving orders to hurl their weapons over the precipices rather than abandon them to the enemy; these were, however, but ordinary devices, and not what I most looked to; for, collecting heaps of stones along the edge of either precipices, there I left them ready to do my bidding.

My preparations were all completed the afternoon before the night on which the enemy was to approach, when, just after dark, with a beating heart, I led seven hundred picked men to my ambuscade; each individual or small party had his or its orders, strict commands were given not to fire until a signal rocket was detached, and then there was to be no rushing out and no hurrying, no chance-blazing, but each marksman was to aim at his man when within sure distance; there was to be no shouting, no talking, silence, with quick and steady firing was to be the order of the night.

The moon was near its full, and would favour us till within an hour of day light; anxiously I watched, my thoughts being, in despite myself, more at Kangra than on my present undertaking, and I could not but picture to myself danger in the quarter where my treasure lay, where was the one creature that was dear to me.

One watch of the night remained when I was roused from my reveries, by the notice that the enemy's advanced guard approached; noisily and confidently they hurried along, without any apparent thought of an enemy, or without thinking it necessary to crown the heights. There was laughter and loose talk among their ranks, jokes were passed as to what night and would happen at Kangra, estimates of the prize to be gained, the booty hoarded in my cellars, and the strong boxes of the *Mahajans*; all this was divided and allotted within my hearing; as, from the point where the defile left the river, I accompanied the onward progress of the advance. Hanging over them, often within pistol-shot, I waited until the leading file had gained all but the last ascent, and had but a few paces more to reach the scarp'd step at top, to gain

which, even if it had been undefended, would have required a bold and active pull, even for a mountaineer. I had closely watched their progress, and at this moment gave the signal, when up shot into the air a rocket; and on the instant echoed from rock to rock peal after peal of musketry, the crash of rocks mingled with the agonized cry of hundreds closed in the cul-de-sac, not knowing which way to turn, or whither to fly; for their whole force of eight thousand men having entered the defile, a small party of my men had closed in on them from the rear, and, according to orders, had spread out and kept up a heavy fire to conceal their weakness. Advance in front, or ascent of the rocks on either flank, was impossible under such circumstances; distracted therefore, and rushing headlong one against the other, trampling over the dying and the dead, the miscreants in front, endeavoured to force their way backward. All the impression I had desired was now made, my object was not butchery, I therefore recalled my men from the rear, and opening out the gorge to the enemy, relaxed my fire from above.

With difficulty I could obtain a hearing and make known to the terrified hill-men that they might now depart unmolested; but when the voice of my herald reached their ears, I at last persuaded the leaders or their *Vaqils* to parley with me above, while their troops, as a pledge against treachery kept their present ground below.

Humiliated to the dust, the Rajahs, Chiefs and others of less note approached; I spoke kindly and cheerily to them, told them I knew they were deceived and misled, and that all I now wanted from them was a pledge against further molestation. Delighted at my moderation, they poured out torrents of praise, and each and all swore to be my friends unto death.

Shortly after daylight all arrangements were made, and by midday we parted, leaving detachments to look to the dying and the dead; before I left, I perceived Gulabi in the wildest part of the pass, and amidst such a scene of horror there moved she along, scanning each face of the dead, as if searching for one she fully expected to find.

At speed I galloped home, with a strange choking at my throat and a fulness of heart that I could not account for: my success had been beyond my hopes, and I had struck a blow that would

render my name terrible to my enemies, as well as shew them that, though slow to anger, I could hit hard when aroused ; moreover from what had now occurred, I had nothing to fear from the *Darbār* ; so what ailed me ? Why was I sad ? I knew not, but pushing on my gallant steed, I entered hastily and almost alone, the gate of my dwelling, threw myself off the horse and hurried to the *zanānā* ; men's faces and the general stir shewed me that some event had just occurred, but I would not be stopped by the many officious dependants who met me on the way, and rather preferred to hear and see all at my own quarters.

The *zanānā* was empty, neither mother nor daughter remained, and the few affrighted servants that I found there could with difficulty make me understand what had occurred. The upshot of which was, that long before day-break, indeed as soon as I was well beyond power of hearing or seeing, the disaffected had (even in the absence of three of their Chiefs who were in confinement,) raised their banner, seized the magazine, and made attempts on the gates ; but Sohun Lal, my *Naiib*, was on the alert, and quickly overpowered the mutineers ; the tidings, however, of the rising, and of the rebels first success was carried to Mahtab with all exaggerations, when she and her mother, in the terror and agony of the moment, fled by the subterranean passage, taking with them but three trusty servants, and not waiting even long enough to pack up their necessary clothing, they set off, no one could tell me whither. Distracted and forboding ill, I sent in all directions, but evening closed, and no tidings reached me ; for days and days my best and truest were employed, but still I could hear nothing of the party, and my worst fears became confirmed, that they had fallen in with some stray bandit party, and, their rank being ascertained, had been carried off.

My emissaries were despatched, with promises of high reward for the mere information of where the females were confined ; and, half demented at my loss, I endeavoured to pursue my ordinary avocations.

As soon as it was possible for the news to reach Lahaur, and replies from thence to arrive, I received the following letters, the tenor of which alarmed and puzzled me more by their conciliatory tone, than had the former notes by their very different character. My *Vaqil's* was a perfect specimen of its kind, and opened my eyes to

the character of the man ; after the usual flourishes it ran thus—“ the *Sāhib*'s head is exalted, his fame overshadows that of every *Sardār* ; all allow it and no voice is raised against my master, for even the envious now see that there is no hope of injuring the noble Bellasis.

The news, my Lord, of the attempt on Kāngrā has wiped away all doubts from the Maharajah's mind ; he now perceives that you were maligned, and that those with whom my Lord was said to have been plotting, were in reality more his enemies than those of the *Rāj*. All is now cleared, and the Maharajah only seeks to remove from my master's mind any feeling of uneasiness as to late occurrences ; he has therefore bestowed on myself, the humblest of my Lord's slaves, a *khilat* of seven pieces, and proposes, if as usual, he should make a progress in the direction of Kāngrā to visit my master's dwelling, and to confer every honour on him ; it is even talked of in the *Darbār*, that the title of Rajah with a handsome *Jāgir* is to be bestowed, as is most justly his due, on the excellent *Sāhib*, who has so gallantly defended the interests of the Maharajah.” “ You are a clumsy scoundrel, friend Sukhan Lal,” said I to myself, “ but let me see what more you have for me,” and I resumed the *Arzi*,—“ even the brother Rajas, who were so angry, are silent, or rather being convinced of my master's worth, are now loud in his praises.

As in duty bound, the faithful *Vagī* watches his master's interests ; to represent more would be disrespectful.”

I thought the fellow had been playing me false and was now convinced of it ; having finished his *Arzi* I took up a *parwanaḥ* with the *fakir*'s seal. It applauded my valour and my skill, and desired me to continue such true and faithful service, and to comfort myself with the assurance of favour and increased honor ; it concluded by desiring that a contingent from my Levies should be *hāzir* by the middle of the month, as the Maharajah intended earlier than usual to take the field, owing to the proposed interview with the Governor-General of India at Rupa. “ Your own presence,” the letter went on to say, “ may be required, but should such honour be your lot, you will be duly informed. The Maharajah desires your welfare and honour, enough has been written.” A very affectionate scrap in the old *fakir*'s hand-writing accompanied the above, congratulating

me "on the new blossoms that were bursting forth on the tree of my fortunes."

I threw the several documents indignantly to the ground, with an exclamation of disgust at the lying and deceitful conduct of those for whom I had acted so fairly and openly. That there was a design to lull me into security, and that Sukhan Lal had entered into the conspiracy, I had no manner of doubt, but what was the exact nature of the scheme I could not conceive.

Without giving offence and again openly embroiling myself, I could not remove my *Vagil*, but I replied to his *Arzi* cautiously, and in a few words, saying, that the Maharajah judged rightly when he looked on me as one of his faithful servants, and to Azizudin I wrote, that "the flowers of loyalty on the tree of fidelity, would only give place to the fruit of more perfect devotion."

I must now return to the field of "the dell of death," where I left Gulābi prying among the dead, as some demented being, scarce conscious of her own vitality, or of the terrible scene around her; thus, she was reported to have continued searching during the day, and to have been especially curious in examining the dresses of a party of Rājputs from the neighbourhood of Kulu(δ), who, to a man, were cut off in the night's conflict; she turned each corpse over and over, examined each feature and then with a wild cry passed on to another; till at length she came to the body of a man considerably past the middle age, but still in the ranks of the soldier; and who, by the scars on his brow, and the deep gashes on his breast and shoulder, appeared on the late rencontre, to have well done the soldier's part, and to have been one of those who gained the extreme point of the defile, and met my men hand to hand. He was attired just as his fellows, but his arms were of better make, and in addition to his matchlock and *talwār* he wore a silver-hilted dagger, or rather knife, in his girdle; when Gulābi approached his corpse, it was lying with the face to the ground, having been apparently hurled from the crest of the defile as he led on his band; the *Kanchani*, therefore, commencing her researches from the other direction, came to it the last; her strength was great, and enabled her to raise the body and turn the face upward, when, uttering a piercing shriek, she fell to the ground. Gulābi was well known and much liked by all; many crowded to help the harmless, and, as was thought, half-witted creature, and in their rude way

to restore her ; when she opened her eyes, and they again fell upon the corpse before her, she exclaimed, " take him away, I've murdered him," and then recovering herself she said more quietly, " I have killed my brother, and destroyed my father's house ; a doomed wretch I have ever been, life to me has long been a burthen, this day shall close my miserable career." All this was mystery to her hearers, but they gathered from her that, by their dress she had recognized her clansfolk ; and by a mole above his right eye brow, she had discovered the body before her to be that of her brother whom she had supposed to have been slain in her defence thirty years before, but who, we afterwards ascertained, was only wounded on the occasion on which his sister had been carried away. Why the poor creature attributed her brother's death to herself, I alone knew, and I was the more shocked at the sequel to the tragedy, for, partially recovering, and none heeding her threat of self-destruction, she was allowed to climb the highest cliff of the defile; from whence, to the horror of all, she threw herself headlong, thus terminating her unhappy career, and in her own defuded creed opening to herself a door of pardon for the unintentional guilt of her life.

The terrible end of Gulâbi was a severe blow to me ; I was saved from a sight of this last tragic scene, but a narration of its circumstances was quickly brought, and it aggravated the wound just caused by the mysterious disappearance of Mahtab and Chandar Kowr.

GULABI'S DIRGE.

Alas for the spring, that too quickly went by!
 Alas for the summer, with storm shrouded sky !
 Alas for the autumn, that brought no repose !
 Alas for the winter, of heart-withering woes !
 Alas for the tree with such promising root,
 That, engrafted on sin, brought forth poisonous fruit ;
 Alas for the light, that was kindled on Heaven,
 But my crime's cursed blast, into darkness was driven.
 Woe, woe to the spoiler, the cruel, the strong !
 Who for villainous sport, did such tyrannous wrong !
 His own sky shall darken, his own root decay,
 And the murderers offspring shall destiny slay ! (c)

NOTES.

(a) Bellasis challenges high authorities when he advocates marriage for a soldier; among others the highest military authority living: but the Duke advocated bullocks for artillery! So who is infallible? After all, "wife" conveys very different ideas to different minds; I mean a wife as she ought to be, and appeal to facts whether such an one has ever been a hindrance to her husband's success.

(b) This is a hill state, situated to the North-West of the British station of Simlah, and lying along the Sutluj; wild and inaccessible, the pinnacles studded with forts, and the country inhabited by a bold and active race, little inclined to submit to any yoke.

(c) Referring to the death of Gulab Singh's son, Udam Singh, who was killed in the remarkable catastrophe which placed Sher Singh on the throne. Few in India can have forgotten that, on the death of Ranjit, in June 1839, he was succeeded by his son Kharak Singh, a man utterly unfitted for the position, and who was wholly in subjection to his own son, Nao Nihal Singh.

In the end of 1840, the poor cypher of a Maharajah died, whether fairly or not, is not known: the court went out to the funeral solemnities, and the ambitious prince was in all the glory of his new title, when the train re-entered the city of Lahaur. There was a narrow gateway, the crowd was great, and made a rush to seize the money, scattered on such occasions among the populace. The elephant on which Nao Nihal was seated, was pushed close to the wall, the bulking gave way, a beam fell and killed both the new Maharajah and Udam Singh, who was seated on the same elephant.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

CONTENTS.

"The Lion asks help from the mouse, to free him from the net he has got into—
 "none so blind as those that won't see,—" as the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
 "so is a faithful messenger to them that send him, for he refresheth the soul of his
 "masters."

— "One pursued by yell and blow,
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,
 And forward bends his head."

Coleridge.

"And hurry, hurry, off they rode,
 As fast, as fast might be—
 Spurred from the courser's thundering heels,
 The flashing pebbles flee !

"And forward, forward, on they go,
 High snorts the straining steed !
 Thick pants the rider's labouring breath,
 As, headlong, on they speed."

Scott.

"What shall we do, Azîzûdîn ? eh *faqîrjî* ! speak plainly,
 and let me have none of your half and half counsel."

Thus spoke Maharajah Ranjit Singh to his most confidential servant, on the 16th August 1831, not many weeks after the occurrence of the events narrated in my last ; the answer given by the Secretary was, as usual, canny though sensible ; he said, quickly but respectfully, "the friends of the *darbar* are the poor *faqîr*'s friends, and your highness's enemies are mine, but it need not be told that I always loved the *farangi*." Thus much he said, and looked hastily round as if he thought there might be listeners, and then more slowly and lowly continued ; "I am but a *faqîr*, and the Raja is a rich man, powerful, and able ; what can your highness's slave do in opposition to his will ?"

"Yes, it is exactly as I thought," replied Ranjit, "I'm but second here; 'tis the Dogra Raja who ruleth at Lahaur, the old Sikh is a tool in his hands; the son and grandson of a king is to be bearded in his own *darbar* by this upstart minion—tell me *faqir*, does your fear of him exceed your gratitude to me?"

"My life is welcome as a sacrifice on my Lord's behalf; speak but the word and thy slave will this instant throw himself into a well, or otherwise devote himself for the king and master of his heart."

"Yes *faqir*, I do not distrust you, but there is an undue leaning on your part towards these Rajas, be it from love or fear the effect is the same, and is most inconvenient to my service, preventing access to my presence, and hindering in many ways the transaction of business; listen to me, I know the power and the address of these creatures of my own upraising, and I so little love contention that I will not disturb them—that is, if they let me alone—but by the favour of Sri Purakji, I'll be master in my own kingdom, and I'll e'en defend those of my servants who serve me faithfully, and not allow them to be trampled on—Bellasis shall be recalled from Kangra; that neighbourhood is now too hot for him; but he is a good soldier and an honest man; we'll give him a clearance of his accounts, after the Rupan *mulakat*, and put him into some other honorable post:—mind me *faqir*, not a hair of his head shall be touched, his safety shall be your responsibility."

The Maharajah quite warmed as he thus spoke, and Azizuddin seeing him so earnest, and having really no ill will towards myself, but merely going with the current against me, replied, "*Bu Chashm*, the royal pleasure is mandate enough for the *Faqir*; but how does your Highness purpose to remove Bellasis? he is firm, may obstinate, and he has a peremptory order to yield only to your Majesty."

"Neither need he, order the preparations to be made; we'll take Ajit Singh and Attar Singh Sundhanwallas; let also Cols. Odani Singh and Ali Baksh be warned to attend with their battalions; we will move towards Khangra with the new moon, and return to Amritsir in time for the *Daserah*; give the necessary orders on both matters, let it be generally understood that every *jagirdar* with his men

at arms must attend fully equipped, and with all possible display, preparatory to proceeding to Rupal."

"Your Highness's orders shall be obeyed," replied the *faqir*, who had scarcely finished the sentence before Raja Dhyani Singh entered, and was as cordially as usual received by Prince and secretary. His quick eye, however, at once told him, all was not right, and though the Maharajah's countenance was unreadable, the undue officiousness of the *faqir* shewed to the powerful minister that the supple moslem had been tripping. Quietly, however, he introduced his budget, and having discussed more confidential matters, proposed to the Maharajah to move to the *darbar*.

The debates of that day, I understood, were more than usually noisy; an eaves-dropper had heard part of the conversation of the *Khilwat*, and had retailed it with exaggerations to some of the *Sardars*, opposed in heart to the Raja: when therefore the affairs of Kangra were brought on the tapis, there were more than the usual number of voices in favour of the foreign officer, and even the *Faqir*, backed by the echo of other tongues, declared his confidence in my integrity. Raja Dhyani Singh set down the *Faqir*, who quailed before him, but not so Jamadar Khushiyal Singh, who, thoroughly hating the man that ousted him from the first place in the counsel, omitted no safe opportunity of thrusting at the Raja and his party; the friends of the *Bhais* joined in the wordy war, and the Maharajah as usual was diverted with the *takrar*, and quite lost his uneasiness of the morning in the pleasure and excitement of the sparring before him.

When the Maharajah considered that enough had been said, and opinions sufficiently disclosed, he turned the subject to that of the approaching *Dasarah* festival, questioned the *Sardars* as to the state of their troops, asked if their numbers were complete, and their arms and accoutrements all in good order; the commandants of the different *Top Khanas* at Lahore were called to the presence; each closely questioned as to any deficiencies, and told that they would be held responsible for the appearance of their batteries at *Amritsar*, where they would be inspected and put through the manoeuvres that they would have to perform at Rupal; practice at the target was also enjoined, so that they should make a good display before the English.

The above was all duly reported to me, but not by my own *Vakil*; for having ceased to trust him, I relied less upon his reports, than on what I gathered from other quarters. I heard also that there was considerable excitement at Lahaur, and that although Raja Dhyān Sing was the mainspring of all measures, was the minister of the interior, the head of the council, and the commander-in-chief, yet there were not wanting voices to murmur against the grasping propensities of him and his friends; and I was led to believe that at this time there were many at court who would have readily joined in any well-devised outbreak against his authority; but the fact was, that the Maharajah was so surrounded by the creatures of his minister, and was so dependant on him in all the concerns of Government, that he could not even, if he would, shake him off; and was, therefore, obliged silently to put up with the domineering *Vasīr*, only occasionally hauling him up in open *darbār*, when he very much exceeded the bounds of moderation in the exercise of his deputed authority.

The communications from the *Darbār* to my address at this time were flattering and conciliatory to the highest degree; I was told that His Highness would probably visit Kāngrā and take me with him to Rūpar, where my skill and address, it was expected, would gain for myself fresh honours, and do credit to the Sikh Government and the Ruler's discernment. Soft words turn away wrath, and in truth they were not lost upon me; but my heart was not now at Kāngrā, and I cared no longer to rule its destinies; the events of the last few months had both altered my views, and deadened the aspirations that I had been enthusiastic enough to indulge in, regarding my charge. I began to see the folly of hoping to effect any thing permanent on a shifting sand, such as was the Government I served; and my eyes suddenly opened to the impossibility of one man working out the plans that I had desired for my principality; I saw too, that their greatest success could only save the ship from wreck during my own life or that of Ranjit Singh; and that on the bouleversement that would take place on his death, my improvements and reformatations would only mark my people and Government for more signal spoliation; to be perhaps, as Sarhind or Lahaur, an object to be pointed at, to mark by its desolation the era of some great event.

My heart was, besides, far from being in my employment, and

while I should have been inspecting my works, and examining my accounts, my thoughts were with her I had lost, devising schemes for her recovery, and racking my brain as to where she could be concealed, what the cause of her silence, whether the whole party had been cut off, or had met with captivity worse than death.

While I was one day pacing the ramparts in such thoughts, the sounds of a *sitar* fell upon my ear; caring little for instrumental music, and indeed scarcely knowing one tune from another, I passed, more than once, three blind old musicians, who, ensconced in an open tower, were vigorously plying away at their strings; suddenly, however, one of them struck up a song, the words of which thrilled through my soul, and drew me quickly to the spot.

"The Sun has set mid clouds afar,

"Why shines not then my evening star?

"The night clouds gather round my tower,

"Where is the lamp for Mâhtâb Kowr?

"Star of my heart, arise! arise!

"Light up thy Mâhtâb's evening skies!

"Lamp of my soul, return, return!

"And in thy Mâhtâb's presence burn!"

It was a song that my sweet girl had often warbled; many a time had the words reproached me, when I heard them from her plaintive voice, as I approached her tower; and now I thought what a fool I had been to lose one opportunity of enjoying her society, while, yet in my reach, and wondered how I could ever have allowed my caution so far to controul me, as to give her a shadow of reason for complaining of my absence.

Disengaging myself from the few followers that attended my steps, I sauntered towards the musicians, and in one, despite of his assumed blindness, I recognized Akram Khân Multâni, the Jama-dar in whose charge I had placed my affianced bride; at the sound of my voice, the man looked up, but suddenly recollecting himself, shewed, as before, two apparently sightless orbs; striking up however, in a different measure, he sang as follows:—

"There is a bird, that sings by night,

And there is a flower, that shuns the light,

And words there are, that may not be said,

Till the midnight clouds o'er the sky are spread."

"More meant than meets the ear," thought I, as I looked hard at the musician, and then turned away and joined my followers.

After some tedious hours of remaining day, I sent a trusty servant to bring Akram Khān to my presence.

This was a task that required a little adroitness, but my *pesh-khidmat* soon suggested a plan, by which the Multāni was to be introduced as an express from Lahāur. Now attired as a Sikh, and with all the swagger and bluster of the *Khālsa* soldier, my *Jamādār* entered, threw down his packet and seated himself on the carpet; I desired the attendants to withdraw, when my companion, raising himself from the floor and stretching out his hands, begged forgiveness for his unwonted *gustākhi*. "Where is she, Akram?" was my reply.

"Safe as yet my Lord."

"You torture me, man, by your delay, tell me where you left the lady, and how you dare to shew yourself without your charge."

"Pardon your servant my Lord, but Akram Khān has not eaten your salt to neglect your orders, or to betray his trust;" and, opening the breast of his wrapper, he shewed me a deep and still unhealed scar on his chest, "this wound, *khudāwand*, was gained in your service, in protecting the ladies; and it is by their order and on their errand I now stand before you."

"I was hasty my friend, but tell me all."

"In few words it shall be done, my Lord; we had no sooner cleared the subterranean passage and emerged into the open country beyond Kāngrā, than, night as it still was, we could perceive more than one party of horsemen hovering around; one troop of a dozen passed close by us, but shewing a bold front, and one of us before and one on either side of the ladies, we gave the "*wah Gūrūji*" and hastily swept by; less fortunate however, was our next rencontre; for, trying to pass a similar party in like cavalier manner, just as the day dawned, the leader fixed his keen eye on my comrade Jenghis Khān and roared out, "they are not Singhs, but *sags* of moslems, and they have women with them; have at them my men." The voice was one I knew, and the eye was not unfamiliar, but before I could collect my thoughts or determine the question as to his identity, round wheeled the squad; we were three, the enemy were twelve, we were moreover encumbered with our charge. The two ladies however shewed little symptom of fear, except urging on their steeds; and as by our rapid sweep past the enemy, we had gained fifty yards on them, before their leader's

short parley with himself, told him to wheel and follow, I had strong hopes of escape, with our hard and well-fed cattle, from the small, half starved nags of the enemy. Desiring my comrades to continue the retreat, but at a gentler pace, I drew up my own good horse and facing him round to my pursuers, stood as steady as a rock, to receive as it were their charge ; astonished at my boldness, every man drew rein, and, taking advantage of the opportunity, I discharged my matchlock at their leader when within twenty yards of me, and sent him rolling on the plain ; the whole party poured in a volley in return, but so hastily, and without aim, that a graze on my knee was the only consequence ; and under cover of the smoke, I turned round and at speed followed my friends, who slackening their pace, allowed me to overtake them, when my two companions, played the same game I had done and with equal success, each bringing down a man, but not without each of themselves carrying away a wound. We were however now less unequally matched, we were still three, they but nine ; we, flushed with our success, their ardour somewhat damped ; the odds however were still too great for us to attempt resistance : we therefore pushed along, keeping the ladies always a little in advance, and occasionally one or all of us delivering our fire, and, without interrupting our retreat, reloading our matchlocks. Thus for a full hour, and over good eight *kos* of country, we had fled, and were now within view of a *Garhi*, the *Killadâr* of which was my friend, and would have gladly sheltered us. The young *Rânt* was still boldly urging on her horse, but the lady mother's courage or strength began to fail ; and, unable to keep up her flagging horse, she fell behind ; I cheered her, shewed her the haven at hand, but all would not avail, and as on her account we were brought nearly to a stand, and thus afforded a better mark, a volley was poured in by our pursuers that brought to the ground one of my comrades, and the horse of Chanda Kowr. I seized the rein of her daughter's horse and urged him on, but she bade me desist, and declared she would not leave her mother. All hope was now lost of effecting our object ; and though I might with ease have saved myself, I preferred to die in defence of those whose salt I had eaten ; throwing myself therefore from my horse, and lifting the Kowr from her's, I dragged the two tired horses back the few paces to where lay the old lady, entangled beneath her dying steed. With a

death blow right and left, I brought our own two good nags to the ground; my surviving comrade slew his, and from their bodies, we formed a sort of rampart."

"Can you not at once come to the point, and tell me where the ladies are?" I exclaimed impatiently. "If my Lord will give me his ear for a moment longer, all shall be known." I was in his hands, and knowing how impossible it is to get some people to tell anything in any way but their own, I bade him proceed. "My master will not care to hear how Akram Khan was rescued; how, attracted by the firing, my friends from the fort came up in time to see the dastard Sikhs carry away the ladies, and to save myself from bleeding to death; both my comrades were quite dead, and for a time I was thought so, but youth and a good constitution saved me, and saving this scar and this, and these two gunshot wounds, I'm not the worse," (baring as he spoke his breast, arm and thigh). "For twenty days I was Manik Chand's guest; he told me that his *Sawārs* had followed the tracks of the ravishers to the fort of Raj-ke-kot, some miles north of Jamu."

"The brothers again," groaned I, "and so I thought, but proceed friend."

"As soon as I could move, I disguised myself as a minstrel, and jealous as are the warders, and difficult as is all access, I soon found a corner in the very dwelling of the Rājās. My *sitar* was not idle, and my Lord knows that Akram Khan's hand is good for more than the bridle or *talwār*. I soon learnt where the two ladies were confined, and had even one brief interview, and attempted another, but failing, I nearly paid the penalty of my life; I therefore thought it was better to risk no more, but to take to my lord the welcome intelligence that the ladies are safe, and honourably treated."

"Then why this mystery, man? What the meaning of all this mountebank paraphernalia. You had good news to bring, why delay or hesitate in delivering it?"

"As I've said, my lord, I was nearly detected; and indeed it did become known that Akram Khan in disguise, was acting the fiddler in the Raja's garden; to prevent pursuit, therefore, and all suspicion, I left part of my raiment, and made such other shew as to let it appear that I had thrown myself into the river and was

drowned. For the same reason my lord, I must not now appear in my own person, or it would bring danger not only on myself, but on my master, and on the ladies he would save. The Raja is a terrible man, my lord, his spies are every where, they may now be watching us."

"Let them," replied I, "ay, let them take my defiance to their master." "Not so my lord; forgive me, but we must be prudent, I have friends in the fort, and the two *blind rāgis* that you saw with me are staunch men and true; leave the matter to us, and we will effect by stratagem what ten thousand men could not do by force, nay what the Maharajah in his might could not effect."

"Let it be so, Akram, and remember that when you've released the ladies, all that I have is your's, you may for ever command me."

"My master is liberal and kind, but Akram Khan's wants are few, a good horse and a fair *maidan*, and he is a happy man."

"Good my friend, you may live to see enough of battle, and the best blood of Arabia and Tartary shall be at your bidding—but tell me Akram is Raj-ke-kote the place of strength we hear? Does it equal Kangra?"

"Equal Kangra! my lord jests with his servant: true I saw but little of Raj-ke-kote, yet it was enough to shew how impregnable is its position, and that man has done for it almost as much as nature. The rock, isolated still more than that of Kangra, has more ample resources, is approachable only by means of baskets or ropes, let over a tremendous precipice; it is then bristling with guns, manned by European deserters, and is garrisoned by hill-men and the Rajah's choicest troops. The Maharajah has never seen the place, and Dhyan Singh will take care he never does."

"A formidable place indeed, but tell me, my friend, do you know what shells are? Could they not turn out the rascals?" "Do I not my lord? (a) Was I not one of the few that with old Diaram cut their way through the *farangi's* ranks at Hatras, and have we not reason to know what shells are? But the case is here very different, and not all the shell-throwing guns in Hindustan could materially affect the comfort of the garrison of Raj-ke-kote; it is as many kos in circuit as Kangra is *gadams*."

"I must go myself, Akram; you look averse to the measure, but indeed I must."

"Impossible, my lord ; you would only ruin the scheme ; your absence from Kangra would at once be known, and even if not, you could never disguise yourself from the keen glances of the Raja's followers." "You are right my friend," and, after a little more parleying, and again assuming his Sikh demeanour, my Multani proudly withdrew.

Lost in anxious thought, I meditated on my blasted hopes, and on the nest of hornets among whom I had ensnared myself ; in the midst of my cogitations, a real messenger from Lahaur arrived with important tidings, which shall be told in my *Vagil's* own words. After the usual *tuslinat* he told me that there had been a very sudden outbreak among the soldiery at the capital, they refused to march or to prepare to march before their arrears were paid up. "The *gurchuras*, my lord, were most violent, and cut down their officers ; throughout the regiments and *paltans* there was one cry for the blood of the *Munshis* (*ls*), who, my lord knows, are the pay-masters, or rather muster-masters of the troops ; and though some innocent men have perished, many a deed of rapine and extortion has been avenged ; and if no other good be effected by the present tumults they will make future commandants and pay distributors more careful as to the portion of their soldier's pay, that they appropriate. Did all our authorities take example from my master these scenes could never occur. All Lahaur is in a fever, shops are shut, and the moneyed men are in terror of their lives, or at least of spoil and dishonor. The Maharajah has shewn great spirit as well as his usual discretion ; he has promised redress and clearance of arrears, but has declared that, though he pardons the past, he will clip the noses and ears of all future offenders ; should matters take a worse turn thy servant will again petition, these few words being given in all haste." Another broil ! blood ! blood ! how true is it that "who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed !" and I tried to turn from the sickening subject, but little besides Raj-ke-kote and Lahaur entered my thoughts that night, and less of sleep fell on my eyelids.

NOTES.

(a) The siege of Hattas is a tale familiar to Indian ears; it was a sketch in Lord Hastings' best style, which was bold and decided, seldom requiring to be re-touched. It was once upon a time—(not now, of course.)—the practice of the English to send a single regiment with a couple of guns, or perhaps even a wing with one gun, to capture a strong fortress; a practice that frequently involved a failure in the first attack, the necessity of sending in the second instance, a much stronger force than would at first have done the work, with great needless expenditure of life, time, and treasure. Or, if the first small party succeeded in taking the place, the garrison generally escaped. Lord Hastings prohibited single guns being ever, on any pretext, detached, and strenuously urged the policy of never sending a force so small as to invite repulse.

(b) The system obtaining in the civil administration of the Panjāb, by which every offence has its fixed price, has gradually crept into the army; fines are imposed on the soldier for military offences, or for leave given and taken without reference to the *Commander-in-Chief*, (when there is such an authority); the Commanders of divisions and brigades are seldom disturbed in their arrangements, and they put the finances of their regiments into the hands of Persian writers, frequently low intriguing fellows. These men having the accounts entirely in their own hands, and the pay being frequently nearer twenty-four months than twelve in arrears, can plunder the soldier to an enormous degree, and, at the time, probably with impunity. But the day of reckoning comes; in any military tumult, the Munshis are the first victims, and many a life is paid as the forfeit for former extortions.

CHAPTER TWELTH.

CONTENTS.

Dellasia, giving the fish he is angling for a sudden jerk, breaks the line and loses the prize.—“The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, but a wise man will pacify it.”

“He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly.”

“Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stop.”

“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings.”

Solomon.

“Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink! Who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust.”

Isaiah.

It was all I could do to forbear accompanying Akram Khan, but I saw that my own presence would only ruin my hopes; having a thousand times enjoined courage and prudence, with a heavy heart, I sent him away. I had no doubt of either his bravery or fidelity: and he knew me well enough, to be sure, that the richest reward in my power would seem in my eyes small, for the man who should restore Mahtab Kowr.

To avoid risque, I did not send any letter by Akram Khan, but on his approach to the place of Mahtab's imprisonment, he was to re-assume the disguise of a minstrel; and by frequent repetition I had taught him a song, which he was to sing in her hearing, to the same familiar air which had already caught my attention.

“Duly as evening's hour returns,
Thy constant star, my Mahtab burns;

But where the fountain, pure and bright,
 To image back its steady light ?
 Oft as night spreads her curtain damp,
 Love lights up memory's faithful lamp ;
 But oh, it shews, and not dispels,
 The gloom that in my bosom dwells."

Happily for me, my mind was not allowed leisure to prey on itself, during the subsequent interval of suspense : the very evening of Akram Khan's departure, as I paced the ramparts, following him in thought, and weighing, for the ten thousandth time, my own hopes and fears, I was interrupted by the approach of my *Naiib*. He made his salute, and as he seemed to have something to say, I beckoned him nearer.

" Well Sohun Lal, what is your news ?"

" Does the *Sakib* remember the shoe that we found when Chand Khan was murdered ?"

" Do I not ? what of it now ?"

" I think I have got the fellow to it."

" What ! and old Ram Singh ? Have you caught him ?"

" No, *Sakib*, I have no news of him, nor do I think he was concerned in the murder ; it was Bhup Singh who committed it, I am sure."

My readers may perhaps remember that after the attempt to murder me, soon after my arrival at Kāngrā, when I sentenced Nand Singh for the crime, his brother was the ruffian who fired at me from the ranks and wounded me, and that I arrested the vengeance my troops were inclined to take, dismissing the man without injury. After my recovery my mind was so engrossed with other subjects, that this rascal, (Bhup Singh by name,) never entered my thoughts, but now that his name was suggested, I at once acquiesced in the probability of his being concerned in Chānd Khan's murder. I desired Sohun Lal to proceed, and the substance of his communication was as follows :—

" *Sakib*, your *gholam* and Ali Verdi Khan have often talked over that bloody business ; we wondered how such a *dagha-baz* as Sukhun Lal had succeeded Chānd Khan as your *Vaqil* at the *darbār*, nor were we ignorant of the jealousies there entertained against my master. You look angry, my lord, that your servants should thus talk of your affairs, but if men have ears and tongues,

the Maharajah himself cannot prevent their using them. The *Mutāni* said one day, "I wonder what is become of Bhup Singh!"

"Gone to Lahaur I suppose," said I, without much thinking.

"If so," replied Ali Verdi, "it is for no good to our master."

"I had no particular reason for what I had said, but my own words afterwards recurred to me, and I wrote on the subject to one I knew at Lahaur. "Your servant, my lord, is bound not to disclose his friend's name, but I will stake my life on the truth of his intelligence."

Here I could hardly forbear interrupting Sohun Lal. I had been harassed into an irritability that at times I could scarcely control, and the mysterious ascendancy that a foreigner holds over the Natives of India, insensibly nourishes a domineering spirit, that we are ourselves hardly aware of till it encounters some opposition. I checked myself however, feeling, that I could not justly punish my *Naiib* for being faithful to his word: and perhaps a little swayed by knowing the independence of his character, and that if I did not choose to take the information, as he choose to give it, he would unhesitatingly walk off. It was with intense interest that I listened to the rest of his tale.

"My lord is doubtless aware that while Chānd Khan supposed himself safe in his secret pranks, he was completely in the power of Raja Dhyān Singh, who can pay higher for information than any other man at Lahaur, and therefore knows more. He was always anxious to get my master out of his road, and if Nand Singh was not openly encouraged by him, in what he did, at least he knew that the death of my lord would not displease the Raja. Bhup Singh hastened back to Lahaur when he left Kāngrā, and communicated with the Raja through Sukhun Lal, likewise a mere tool of the great man's. It was but a bungling scheme they laid, in determining on the murder of Chānd Khan, that the blame might fall on my master. Sukhun Lal had reasons of his own for wishing to get the *Mutāni* out of the way, however, and Bhup Singh was just in that state, thirsting after blood, and hardly restrained by his employers from falling directly upon the *Sahib*, that he was glad to flesh his sword on one whose death would certainly give my lord distress, and probably bring him into danger. It was in the disguise of a *Banniah* that Bhup Singh first gained admission, and learned the spot of Chānd Khan's confinement."

Here I could not repress myself any longer, "and how," I exclaimed, "did he enter that night? How did he carry off old Ram Singh? Which among my men is the traitor—speak you *pinukharam*!"

"My lord, what is the use of this violence? Your servant will tell all he can, but he must take his own time."

"You had better speak," I answered, in great anger; "if you refuse to give me full information, you shall be put in irons, and punished as a traitor; ay, both you and Ali Verdi Khan."

"The *Sāhib* can do as he pleases, the Multāni knows nothing of what I have been telling, and I will not say one word beyond what I had first intended."

I was ashamed of myself, and felt how I was lowered in my deputy's eyes by this violence; as therefore I could not compose myself at the moment, I dismissed Sohun Lal, saying—"I will hear the rest to-morrow, enough for this time." He withdrew in silence, scarcely even making a *salam*.

When alone, I reproached myself bitterly for the violence I had shewn, and felt that I had thus perhaps closed the only door by which I could obtain tidings of a point I had much at heart, and even, as my restless fancy suggested, possibly connected with what lay nearest my soul. "These brothers!" thought I, "whence have they power? Is there no escaping their toils? Am I but a fly, caught in the net they have woven round me, and are they watching my struggles till they find it convenient to pounce on their victim? Is my treasure even now in their grasp?" And these thoughts almost overwhelmed me.

The night wore on in restless anxiety; exhausted by mental conflict, I found it some relief to listen to a storm that was gathering outside, and to watch the lightning flashing into my room, which was only lighted by a small oil lamp, standing on the top of a tall, slender brass tripod. While I lay tossing from side to side, striving to fasten my thoughts on the elemental strife without, I heard the sentry who paced outside my chamber, challenge some one who approached.

"An express from the Maharajah's camp," was the reply, and the messenger was ushered into my presence. I opened the packet eagerly; the first enclosure I saw to be from Sukhun Lal, and sung

away in disgust : the next was from the *fagir*, and I laid it down to decypher at leisure, while I read the third document, a *parwā-nāh* from the Maharajah, desiring that all might be ready for his reception at Kāngra on the third day from that which was now dawning. Before issuing the necessary orders, I perused Aziz-u-din's communication.

"To the asylum of exaltation and nobility, the support of magnificence and valour, Colonel Bellasis ;—May he be dignified by an increase of royal distinctions. The Maharajah has commanded the poor *fagir* to communicate to his favoured servant Colonel Bellasis, the satisfaction felt in the sublime mind by his faithful guardianship of Kāngra. But as his Highness desires to see his newly raised troops in perfect discipline, he intends for a season to remove his trusty servant, and to employ him in preparing the troops for the interview that is to take place at Rupar, with the English *Lord Sahib*. Kāngra will, for the present, be again held by its former Governor, and as soon as the Maharajah can spare his faithful and esteemed servant Bellasis from duties in the field, he will be at liberty to return to his charge."

I felt a choking at my throat as I read this announcement of the royal will ; often as I had desired to be relieved of my charge, and full of painful associations as Kāngra now was to me, I felt a wrench in separating myself from it. It was consolatory, however, to find that the fortress was not to fall into the immediate power of the brother Rajas, and I also had a vague hope that in my movings I might learn some tidings of Māhtab Kowr. And then, with unspeakable disgust, I took up the *arzi* of my *Vaqil*, and read it, feeling all the time as if my hands and eyes were contaminated by the touch and sight of such a perfidious wretch's writing. After a preface of more than usual adulation, Sukhun Lal went on to say :—"Your Excellency's servant watches his master's interests with the same unslumbering vigilance. The disturbances mentioned in my last *arzi* were soon quelled by the decision of the Maharajah, and your slave accompanied the royal train when it left Lahāur. Through his Excellency's good fortune, we have proceeded prosperously so far on our road to Kāngra. Reports have reached your well wishers that the Maharajah designs to terminate my lord's prosperous reign, but those who know the *Sahib's mizaj*, cannot suppose for a moment that he will be displaced tamely, and

they rejoice in thinking that the attachment of his troops makes him too powerful for the Maharajah to wish for any misunderstanding with him. Enough has been said."

I tore the paper into fragments and flung it away, exclaiming, "a clumsy tool Dhyān Singh has got! Can he imagine by such a poor contrivance to urge me into disobedience and ambition? He will not get me out of the way so easily." I then prepared my answer to the *darbar*, despatched it, and made the necessary arrangements for His Highness' arrival. In the midst of these employments, Sohun Lal's conversation of the preceding evening was continually recurring to my mind. He was as usual in his place, prompt, steady, energetic, but no words past except on his own immediate business; pride and shame withheld me from referring to any other subject, and he shewed no sign of remembering our interview. When evening came, I was feverishly impatient for some communication with my *Naib*, and as time wore on without bringing him, I was about to swallow my pride, and summon him to my presence: but then I remembered that by this time he was probably sunk in the periodical oblivion to which he subjected himself by intoxication. Exhausted and unhappy, I lay down, and fell asleep.

On the day appointed, the royal cortège made its appearance, and I certainly did feel some reward for my adherence to my word, when the Maharajah himself approached the gate, and obtained entrance only by going through the formalities he had himself prescribed. "See *faqir ji*! I have one servant at any rate who obeys my commands," said Ranjit as he entered. Then calling me to sit on the *farash* near him, he said in an encouraging tone, "Bellasis, this is the best day's work you have done yet. I must have you awhile with me in the field, but you shall soon come back to Kāngra, and in the mean time old Dandawr Singh will faithfully hold his former post." I bowed submission to the royal mandate; and, at any other time, I should have felt gratified as Ranjit personally inspected the district under my charge, and expressed his wonder and surprise at the aspect it wore. "This cannot be prepared for shew," said he to those around him, as he rode through the spacious streets and well supplied *bazars*. "I wish Kashmir had been in such hands." A look passed between the brothers Dhyān and Gulāb Singh, and Khushiyāl Singh could barely

seem not to hear a speech that implied such censure on himself. Aziz-ud-din, who always tried to keep the peace (perhaps afraid that violent altercations might bring to light secrets that were as well withheld from the royal ear,) now put in his word, "the asylum of the Universe probably remembers Wadipoor." "Ay," said Ranjit laughing, "when I was expected to arrive in the evening and set out the next morning, my viceroy ran up long lines of kutchas walls, with painted doors, and had these *ghat mut* streets illuminated, so that we seemed passing through extensive *bazars*. It happened that I halted next day and discovered the trick; I made him forthwith pay down as much money as it would have cost to build the real houses, and some of these days I'll take a peep to see how they get on."

I smiled, as in duty bound, but my thoughts were elsewhere; Sohan Lal sedulously avoided any but official intercourse with me, and I thought it useless to urge him to disclosures while the cloud was on his brow.

One day I was summoned to a private interview with the Maharajah, the *faqir* alone being present; Ranjit was evidently nervously anxious as to the figure he and his troops should cut before the English, and he questioned me earnestly on my opinion. "Tell me," he said, "tell me Bellasis, do you think these *faringis* would face my men, if it came to a fight? You look disconcerted, but you ought to know enough of me to understand that, when I ask an opinion I want one; not a mere echo of my own words." I was, and could not help appearing a good deal taken aback: I was averse to offend, and did not see how I could reply without touching the Maharajah on the most tender point. But I stuck to my principle, and replied sincerely "that I did not think his army could successfully confront one with European discipline."

"But why, Bellasis? see my guns—look at my Infantry—count my Cavalry—and then measure the numbers of these *faringis*."

"Your Highness' servant wishes well to the *Khalsa*, and to the Government whose salt he eats, but he answers honestly, and says what he thinks."

"Then tell me, man, why you think so? Fear not, speak out."

"I may be wrong, but there are many reasons; the Europeans

have superior discipline and better leaders, and their gradations of rank are more complete."

"But we could bring four times their number into the field."

"Which force you have no one to handle—it would therefore destroy itself."

"What! could not Ventura, or Court, or Avitable? Could you not yourself? but perhaps you would not: is that your meaning?" and the old Chief's single eye glanced fire. This was the point that I had feared the conversation would come to; however I replied respectfully that I trusted there was no occasion for asking the question, and that the friendship between him and the Company would remain unbroken. But he was not to be so answered, and said impatiently, "that is no reply to my question." "Please your Highness, I would neither offend nor deceive, but since you ask me I must answer, that I could not fight against the English." "You should have told me so before," exclaimed the Maharajah, violently—"you have deceived me—you have eaten my salt (a), only to fail me when most wanted."

My ears tingled at the reproach, but feeling how little I had deserved it, how well I had worked for all I had received, I replied in a tone less respectful than was my wont, "I have eaten your Highness' bread, and moreover have been honored with your favor, but I may say that I have done my duty, and more than my duty, in lieu thereof. I have encountered danger and provoked enemies, because I would not betray my trust, but would obey to the letter your own orders. On the other hand let me remark, that you enrolled me as your servant without stipulations, and surely if it was free of your Highness to discharge me at any time, I was equally at liberty to choose another master. As I have told you, I am not an Englishman, but I have so much fellowship with them that I could not draw a sword against their cause."

The old *fagir*, who was seated on the blind side of the Maharajah, had been casting deprecatory looks at me throughout the debate; but when I came to this explicit declaration, he gazed in silent astonishment. I was prepared for an outbreak of the Lion's wrath, but for the moment every other feeling in him seemed swallowed up in surprize at my plain dealing. He looked at me for some moments, as if to make sure he had heard my words aright; and then his better nature prevailed. "Well done *farangi*," he

exclaimed, "Eh, *faqirji*? Do you think there are many tongues in the *darbār* that would speak as honestly?" Azizuddin, seeing what was his cue, launched forth in praise of my sincerity, "Precious are the pearls of truth, when strung on the bracelet of faithful actions. Happy is the sovereign in the sunshine of whose favor the blossoms of uprightness expand and bloom. Sweet is the fruit of righteous dealing, though the husk may be unpalatable."

"*Bas, bas, faqir*," interrupted the king, "Bellasis has risked his head, but the danger is past; I know now what work he will do, and what he will not; and I believe that, what he undertakes he will not flinch from."

I was not astonished after the preceding conversation, that the *faqir* took an early opportunity of seeing me alone, nor at the excessive cordiality of his manner; "you have weathered a storm," he said, "but now you have only prosperous breezes to waft you to the haven of your desires." I sighed, feeling bitterly that even the royal favour could do little to lighten the load on my heart. "My friend looks sad," continued the courtier, "what is his grief? Can the poorest of the Maharajah's servants do aught to relieve it?"

Azizuddin was certainly a strange confidant for a love affair; but though I might as well have talked of music to one born deaf, as of my feelings for Māhtab Kowr to the *faqir*, yet he could understand the fact, that I had lost a certain property that I valued, and that I was jealous lest it had fallen into an enemy's hands. My heart longed to disburthen itself, and I had much confidence in the soundness of his counsel; I therefore related the bare facts of Māhtab's story, and my suspicions of the brother Rajas being concerned in her capture. The old man listened with interest, for to him each character introduced was like a piece to a chess-player, and he calculated how it would affect his game. "The brother Rajas!" he said at length, "you talk, *Sāhib*, as if there was but one soul in those two or three bodies!" "And is it not so?" I replied, "have they not thus gained wealth, rank, influence? and are they fools enough to give up all this by quarrelling?" "You are right, they will keep up their appearance of unanimity; but my friend, if two men ride one horse, one must have the front seat, and the other must be less comfortably placed, and think you this will produce no

heart-burning? Any attack from without they would join to repel, but you are not the man I take you for if you can imagine that Dhyān Singh and Gulab Singh can be without jealousies between themselves. Of Sachet Singh I do not speak; he is in every way inferior to his brothers." I acquiesced in the probability of the *jaqir's* opinion, and then asked his advice. "Wait," he answered, "wait till I consider, we must do nothing rashly, but I think I shall be able to help you."

Somewhat relieved at having so able an ally in my quest of Mahtab Kowr, I was a shade less anxious to hear the rest of Sohun Lal's story, and resolved to wait his time. My *Vaqil* had presented himself on the day of his arrival, I could but order the reptile from my presence, and forbid him ever again to approach, and he had too much to dread from investigation to seek any reason for my conduct. Moreover I had now no longer use for a *Vaqil*; I could not conceal from myself that my position was lowered, and this no man likes; but I was too proud to let my feelings be seen, and indeed I had now little to attract me to any spot in the Maharajah's dominions, except the one wherein lay my treasure.

During my stay at Lahāur, I had not witnessed any of those revels that I heard were common at the court; but at Kāngrā, where I was in a manner the host, I was obliged nightly to attend the Saturnalia. (5) Ranjīt himself rarely became intoxicated, and it was incredible what quantities of liquid fire he swallowed without its affecting his sobriety. Few of his courtiers, however, could thus carry the liquor, and he took a devilish pleasure in seeing them drunk; even worse. I now witnessed what Gulābī had described of his plying the miserable natch-girls with ardent spirits and intoxicating drugs, and setting them like so many furies to fight with each other. I cannot express the disgust these scenes occasioned, and they fixed the determination, that had been floating in my mind, to quit the service and country of the Maharajah, as soon as I obtained tidings of Mahtab's fate. One evening, before we quitted Kāngrā, Dhyān Singh solicited the royal permission to visit his *jaqir* before joining the rendezvous at Rupar. Ranjīt was in a good humour, and granted the request; it was all I could do not to look significantly at Azizudin, for my thoughts instantly flew to Rāj-ke-kot; although the Raja had not specified that place as the point he was going to, something assured me of his destina-

tion, and my heart trembled. When I met the *faqir* in private, he agreed with me, "but," added he, "I hope this visit of the Raja to his own castle, will further your views; my spies are round him, though he thinks himself so safe. By this time Akram Khan has probably reached Râj-ke-kot; one of my retainers, who is a confidential Munshi of Dhyân Singh's, shall manage matters. Ah, Colonel *Sâhib*! what an advantage we possess, who can use the pen, that key to greatness! *Allâh* be praised, the poor *faqir* need trust his thoughts to no one he does not choose, while the Rajah, ay, and the Maharajah himself, cannot communicate with others without help!"

The *faqir*, when he had delivered himself of this harangue, took his departure, and in few days we were all under weigh for Amritsir; I quitted Kângrâ with a pang, yet was on the whole pleased to find myself in active military life. Every day I manœuvred my men, and wrought hard to perfect their training; "what is all this for?" would sometimes rise to my mind, but I dismissed the thought, anxious to do my duty for the present, and glad of a channel into which I could direct the eager restlessness of my spirit.

NOTES.

(a) It can scarcely be necessary to tell any reader that salt is the emblem and pledge of fidelity all over the East. But the highest notion of honour in this country only extends to remaining faithful to one master, as long as a man continues in his employ: it is no blot on a soldier's character to quit one service, and sell himself to an enemy. Loyalty to an individual or party, as an inherent part of the character, such as we see, (or at any rate, read of,) in Europe, is not dreamed of here.

(b) A subject that no man would willingly bring before the woman he wishes to respect and admire; but if ladies will lend their presence to scenes of infamy, they must excuse a friend who tells them of their error. A young woman, not acquainted with Indian life, might attend a *sâch*, in perfect simplicity; and if she went, the fault would be in those who took her there. But it is difficult to believe, that any matron who has been some years in India, is not aware of the character of these disgraceful spectacles; and passing strange is it that she should grace them with her presence. The remarks and jests called forth among the natives on these occasions, it would be as difficult for a modest woman to guess, as it would be for me to put in words fit for her to read; but my ears have tingled at hearing such insults, and my indignation and shame have burned at seeing ladies expose themselves to such. In Hindustân, where Eu-

Europeans have been long known, women are not compromised by adhering to their Western habits of life; though, I think, *dancing* is a most undesirable performance on the part of Christian ladies before people who look on that exercise as a badge of infamy: but among the Sikhs it is different; and if ever Englishwomen again form part of a cortège in the Panjab, it is fervently to be hoped they will not, by undue freedom, expose themselves to such gross and insulting observations, as once happened. Forgive me, fair friends—I speak thus because I reverence the female character; and it is not for the lady subjects of the first lady in the world, to degrade their sex among strangers.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

CONTENTS.

"Confidence in an unfaithful man, in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth, and foot out of joint."

Solomon.

*"If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me,
Without my stir."*

Macbeth.

*"Ere sleep stern Oswald's senses tied,
Oft had he changed his weary side;
Composed his limbs, and vainly sought,
By effort strong, to banish thought,
Sleep came at length, but with a train,
Of feelings true, and fancies vain,
Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
The expected future with the past."*

Scott.

One hour of the day remained of an evening in the month of September, when a cavalcade was seen approaching the new, and still-rising fortress of Raj-ke-kot. It was a spot of which the strength and position were hardly known beyond its immediate precincts: the present possessor understood its value as a resource in any evil day, and took every precaution to prevent its fame from going abroad. The leader of the cavalcade, having motioned the running footmen who were by his side, to the rear, beckoned nearer to him one who, riding a step behind, seemed by his bearing and attitude privileged above his fellows. The *suwari* did not consist of less than five hundred horse and foot, a bold-looking, and strangely-mottled assemblage; there were Hindus, Sikhs, and Mussalmâns in apparent good fellowship; for, save and except those immediately around the Chief, the party seemed fully enjoying themselves, and the loud hearty laugh, the rough joke, and the capering and prancing of the well-conditioned horses, betokened

that the service was a good one, and the men well satisfied with themselves and each other. Those who ran beside, and immediately around the Chief, wore the features and costume of hill-men; the rest, as I have said, were a mingled host, Purubis along side of Pashawaris; wild Akālis and swaggering Sikhs, and strutting Pathiāns, abreast of soberer, (though more martial,) Rājputs.

The leader of this band, attired in a costume half Frank, half Oriental, might, by a slight stretch of imagination, have been taken for a knight of St. John, or for one who led the hosts in the campaigns so misnamed the Holy Wars. He was clearly of an Eastern mother though his complexion was light; his features were large, but of perfect symmetry, eyes dark and piercing, form and bearing, light, compact and noble; his stature was middle-sized and of faultless proportion, save for a slight lameness, which defect, however, did not appear as he rode. The Chief's dress consisted of a back and breast-plate of polished steel, his arms bore gauntlets of the same metal, and a half-casque, half-turban, completed his armour, his weapons being a double-barrelled pistol of exquisite workmanship at the pommel of his saddle, and a common-looking sword by his side. The running attendants carried double-barrelled guns and rifles, and all in the train were well armed, though after various fashions, with long matchlocks, spears, carbines, pistols, knives and swords.

The man who was summoned to approach the leader was a smart little figure, with more of the Secretary than the soldier in his air. His features were sharp, and his eye had all the Hindu acuteness, with a sinister expression, very repelling until he spoke; and then the ease of his manner, his fluent discourse, and an irresistible "bophommie," made you think how unjust had been your first impression. At his master's sign this man approached, and took the place of the attendants who fell in the rear. "What was it, Chandu, that you told me yesterday he said?" enquired the leader in an unconcerned manner, but emphasizing the pronoun. "My lord, with my own ears I heard him say that the Maharajah only wanted opportunity to destroy you; that he felt your wealth, ability and influence over the army, and above all, the unanimity that subsisted among the branches of your house." Something like a smile curled the Chief's lips, and was followed by a long drawn breath that might have been a half-sigh.

"It may be so," he muttered, "yet I cannot believe it; I am more necessary to him than the fawning *faqir*, the bluff Bhatls, or the treacherous Jamadār. Among the buffoons and fiddlers around him, where would he find one to fill my place? Ay, or among the *farangis* either? He could not do without me—no—I'm safe—but then"—and he stopped, looking as if he thought he had already said too much. The servant, however, not perhaps catching his eye or his tone, repeated, "Safe indeed, my lord! It may be my lord's pleasure rather to follow than to lead; but count your possessions and your well-wishers, my lord, cast your eye on the country we are now passing through, and on those towers we are now approaching, and then say what is there in the Panjab to resist you?" The Chief did glance at the massy battlements before him, and there were pride and ambition in his eye as he exclaimed, "Yes, those towers would resist a strong host;" but in a moment recovering his usual calm and gentlemanly demeanour, he added, "you are mistaken, Chandu, if you think I would draw my sword against the Maharajah; he has made me what I am, and I should be worse than a dog to requite him with rebellion. No, these walls are built for other purposes; the Maharajah is weak and worn out, he may die to-morrow, he may be dead this moment, who then guides the States? Who is there, among the besotted, cowardly, drunken crew, to hold the government for one day? To keep friendship, or rather, peace with the *farangis*? to command the respect of the provinces; and above all, to restrain and curb our own soldiery; that mass of ruffians that it has been his Highness' pleasure to collect, and that he alone can compel? They are now deeply in arrears, and many of the leaders very unpopular, some of the best, as well as some of the worst. Ranjit Singh's death would be the signal, if not for total anarchy and a rush on the *toshah-khāna*, at least for much bloodshed and many masters. And then who would be safe? Certainly not those who had neglected to prepare for their own safety. I'm saying more than perhaps is wise; but you have a nose and tongue, Chandu, you are prudent, and will not run the chance of losing them."

There was little alteration of tone throughout this speech, the speaker seemed rather communing with himself, than expressing any opinion to his companion, and he continued in the same strain; "It is no secret that the Maharajah's only son is a fool,

and *his* son again is a child. How then can we avoid commotion? This land of rivers, fated to be the field of perpetual battle, must again be fought for, again be won. But enough of this. Tell me where are those foolish women? and how fare they?"

"In the western tower, my lord; they sigh their time away, but *she* will soon be complaisant enough."

"None of your smirks, Chandu, tempt me not by such words. Is she not a Rājputni, and of a princely house? No, I should dishonour myself if I dishonoured her." The menial shrunk at the retort, and still more at the glance of his master, who was not, he saw, in a mood to be trifled with, he therefore answered respectfully, "The ladies are honourably tended, Rajahji; they have nothing to complain of, but as I was ignorant of your Highness' intentions, I did not think it right to listen to their lamentations, or do more than assure them of right honest treatment."

"'Tis well, Chandu, for by the ashes of my father, and by the head of my first born, I would avenge their wrong, and doubly would I chastise him who wronged them in my name. They may be foolish, weak, infatuated—what woman is not? The mother may be desirous to sell her child to a *farangi*, and the girl may love her own disgrace, but should I therefore dishonour myself, and be handed down to posterity as the spoiler of the fallen house of Kāngrā? Yet I would I had not seen her—it is hard to think of so much beauty falling into the hands of a *farangi*, ay, of the upstart,—but Chandu, you at least ought to have known me better than to think I would take such poor revenge. That scoundrel, Bhup Singh, might fancy that he had brought me an acceptable prize, but you, did you ever know me crush a dove to be revenged on a hawk?"

"My lord is ever generous and noble, and his servant well knew that the ladies would meet honourable treatment at his hands. Indeed, it was mainly to rescue them from the ruffians they were with, that I accepted the charge in your Highness' absence; so careful have I been not to curtail their comforts, that, I fear, they have had too much liberty; a minstrel lurked about here for many days, and once, when he was strumming his *sitar* outside, I fancied I heard responsive notes from within. One day too, the younger lady held out money, as if to give in charity to the fiddler, but

when he approached to take it, he lingered as if he had more to say than thanks for the coin. I appeared, however, from the recess in which I stood, and the musician made his *salām* and walked off. When I made enquiries, there was no trace of him to be found, but unless I am mistaken, I caught a glimpse of him yesterday in a *fagir's* habit."

The Chief listened in silence, and not unmoved—"this must," he at length said, "be an emissary from Bellasis." Then, after another pause, "tell them Chandu that their *pardah* shall never be lifted by me or by my servants; and on you I leave the fulfilment of my orders. I am myself a Pahāri and a Rājputra, and desire the honor of the most distant branch of our stock. If they are disgraced, it shall be their own doing, not mine."

Chandu thought that this was his time to interpose, and strike a blow by which to gain favor with his secret master, without risking his safety with him whom he outwardly served. In a tone of the softest and most adroit flattery, he replied, "As the stars shine in a dark night, so do virtuous deeds in a wicked court. My master's generosity will bind all his own tribes to him, more firmly than ever, and the *farangis* in our service, who are not to be despised, will honor the Chief who acts according to their own fanciful notions about letting women have their own way. By restoring the lady to him on whom she has fixed her affections, my Lord will do more for the honor of the house, than by thwarting her; a woman will accomplish what she sets her heart on, or will perish in the attempt; should she die in our hands, or even escape and throw herself into the *Wilāyī's* arms, my master's name would be branded with cruelty, among both Paharis and *farangis*."

The wily Secretary saw by the Raja's countenance that he had said enough, had made the impression he desired, and therefore was silent; no more words passed, till the cavalcade approached what no longer seemed an embattled fortress, but a scarped hill, rising abruptly from the plain, and detached by considerable intervals, from the other peaks and ridges that, like the billows of an ocean, rose in all directions around. A voice from above challenged the party, the pass word and countersign were given;—a huge basket was let down by a windlass; the leader and half a dozen of his followers entered it without dismounting, by a sort of wicket, which being closed, a

signal was given, and the precarious machine was in an instant raised two hundred feet above the natural level, to a broad terre-pleine, where were drawn up, to receive their lord and master, Rājā Dhyān Singh, six thousand troops, the flower of hill and plain. The Rājā emerged from his basket, received the *nazars* of his officials and touched the proffered swords of his chief officers, (a) glanced at his retainers, and with a kind word or courteous gesture to those most worthy of notice, dismissed them, and wended his way towards where the board of works was in full play. As he approached the nearest tower, a lean, emaciated person, whose eye beamed with intelligence, came forth from a group of workmen, and, *rupi* in hand, offered his welcome. "Ah, Ahmed! how fares it with thee? How proceeds the work?" enquired the Rājā kindly, and in his most dulcet strain, "*Ap ke ikbal se*, all goes on well, but it would be better if your Excellency was more at your own house, and among those who pray for you." "Would I could be so, Ahmed! Thank you, however, all the same: but what is this? what are you after here?" pointing to a half sunken shaft and gallery with embrasure-like openings. The *raj-mistri* smiled, and energetically pulling his long, thin, black beard, replied: "It meets your Highness' *murzi*, I trust? See here, *Rājāji*; if your guns were to fire, from the eminence on which we stand, it would be what the *farangis* call, *plunging* fire, and a single shot would strike but a single object; whereas, one sent horizontally may carry death through a whole *paltan*. Your slave has therefore been talking with old Fyz Ally, the *tōp-jī*, who is a very *hoshyar* man, a perfect Lohman; indeed my lord, it was he shewed me the *hikmut*, for I only saw the defect, but had not the *ukūl* to remedy it, when old Sponge Staff said, 'Ahmed, you are an ass, though the *Raja Sahib* thinks you a smart fellow.' I was angry, your Highness, and would have struck him, but he is an old man, so I only said, 'No *gāli*, if you please, *Commandant-jī*, but shew me what to do, and I'll gladly do it; I am anxious to be taught, and not too old to learn.' Thus I softened the old fellow, and he shewed me the *hikmut*, your Highness," "If you don't make shorter work of shewing me, Ahmed, I shall be of Fyz Ally's opinion."

"Why, don't you see it my lord? The terre-pleine of every tower is sunk, until, instead of being 200 feet,

or more, above the surrounding country, it is not more than 30 feet ; just enough to give a good command, and to prevent escalade. In each tower will be three openings for guns, one to fire down each of the two adjoining curtains, and one to scour the country in front." The Raja's brow darkened, as the *mistri* with breathless eagerness explained his design. " You are a fool, Ahmed ; why, you are throwing away my *rupis*, and destroying the very strength of my fortress. And you, too, Chandu, you are worse than an idiot, you must be a rogue." The Secretary shrunk back abashed, but not so the mason, " Forgive your slave, my Lord," he said, but his wild eye glanced fire, and betokened any thing but meekness under rebuke ; " pardon your servant, but consider before you condemn." The Rajah smiled, and replied, " Good, go on Ahmed, I was wrong to speak so : go on, I'm attentive, shew me your scheme throughout." The *mistri* joined his hands with a more subdued air, "*Ap maf ke ji*, there will be no fort in the world like Rāj-ke-kot. What is Lahāur ? What is Amritsir ? Bah ! they are but so many thin walls laid one against another, to tumble down by the concussion of their own guns ; but your Highness will have a noble fortress, without blemish."

" Well, Ahmed, I hope so ; but I've travelled far to-day and need rest : let me hear how it is to be, or I must leave you."

" Pardon your slave, my Lord, he proceeds to present his *urzi*. The circuit, you are aware, is three *kos* ; a tower at every hundred *kadam* will give forty towers, each of which will be, as I've said, sunk, from 120 to 150 feet, and will at bottom be 70 feet in width. But, as there the wall, or rather the side of the hill, will be 130 feet thick, tapering to 60 feet at the top, there will be ten steps or terraces between the terre-pleine at the bottom, where the guns will work, and the slope of the breast-work, corresponding with the main breast-work that is to run all round the building. Below, as I've said, will be three embrasures for guns : these will have shutters to close at will, and conceal the guns : and each intermediate terrace shall be loop-holed for matchlock men, wall pieces, and so forth ; while from the upper one, the troops will fire over, as from an ordinary breast-work."

" Ah ! I see your meaning now ; but Ahmed, you have put your guns and men into a well : pray how are they to get in and out ?"

The *mistri* smiled; "So I thought at first, your Highness, but the remedy is simple enough. If my Lord will allow his slave to accompany him towards the *Khās Muhāl*, he will see the whole plan."

"Why not here? my friend: I am all attention."

"Because your Highness, the key of the padlock is there."

"Good friend *mistri*; you deal in riddles, but you must be humoured;" and the Chief, with his few followers, and a train of idlers proceeded towards his own residence.

Suddenly they came upon a huge hole and stopped, the Raja exclaiming, "why, what have we here? Has there been an earthquake? Or are you mad, Ahmed!"

The *mistri* pulled his beard more fiercely than ever; his eye was wilder, and his gesticulation more abrupt, while he said, "No, my Lord; this is the key I talked of; here will be a hall, a hundred feet in diameter, sunk 80 feet; it may be roofed over with a dome, and be a perfect *bihisht* as a dwelling place in the hot weather. Four ramps will descend at a gentle slope into the subterranean apartment; and from it four galleries will be cut slanting towards the outer towers. The passages will be just wide enough for a gun, except at the point where each gallery branches out into ten roads to the respective ten towers; and there will be room for guns to cross each other: In recesses off the galleries will be the magazines, and should the enemy ever throw in shells, all the garrison, except those on duty, may lie here as safe as their hearts can wish. The towers themselves can be roofed, at a height of twenty or thirty feet for the same purpose. Fyz Ali told me this was a late European discovery, and that the *farangis* themselves have not made much use of it."

"Not bad, indeed, Ahmed," said the Raja, "but, taking your own comparison, your plan locks the guns up, too much for my fancy; there are too many loop-holes, things only fit for women and cowards."

"Not so, my Lord; your guns are still as free as ever to work all round the lower terre-pleine, and even at top to play around as on ordinary ramparts; for, the parapet at top being sixty feet wide, you have only to divide it into two steps, and you have a platform of thirty feet for your upper tier of guns to play on, and a breast-work as many feet thick to cover your battery; one great advan-

tage of this upper story, as of all raised works, is, that when the upper defences are knocked off, you have only to sink your terrepleine and breastwork by clearing away the rubbish, and you have in a few hours a more formidable, because a thicker parapet between you and the enemy, and if you lose a trifle in elevation, you gain porportionally by a more horizontal fire. By such a double, or, if you like, treble or even quadruple tier of guns, and ten-fold tier of small arms, (as every step from top to bottom of the tower would be perforated) your Highness would, as Fyz Ali says, invert the common order of attack and defence, which supposes all fortresses to be weak, inasmuch as they can only bring one, two, or three guns to bear upon a point, whereas the besiegers may bring any number; but this source of weakness my master must now see has been overcome by his servant, or rather by Fyz Ali, and we can pour upon the enemy, (if ever we find one bold enough to attack Rāj Kot,) a heavier fire from any one quarter than he can bring to bear on it. This principle, Rājaji may, you will observe, be carried to any extent; it need not be restricted to the towers, but every curtain may be so hollowed out, and the whole circuit of Rāj Kot may bristle with successive tiers of large and little guns, as Fyz Ali says do the big boats of the *farangis*, one of which often carries seventy and eighty, placed in double or treble boxes one above the other."

"Now I see the *tajwiz*, Ahmed, but the expence will be enormous, and before entering on such a scheme, you ought to have had my permission."

"Less expence than my Lord may at first sight suppose; earth is wanted in many directions for the works in progress; it must be dug, and surely better take it where good may be done, than make unsightly holes, to be afterwards levelled down at great expence, or else become receptacles for filth. Thus, when I had marked off the lines, I requested the Kotwal to forbid earth being taken from any other place, so while the *gharib-log* help themselves, they do your Highness' work; for, as there are buildings going on all round, as well as shafts and galleries, the one helps the other. Again, the very thickness of the walls saves expence, if they were thin, they would require to be faced with masonry, but now they need only be smoothed and cleared."

"Ah! I see, Ahmed, you are seldom wrong, but in future al-

ways consult me : an *arzi* costs nothing, and a word in my ear less ; one or other on such occasion as this might save you a lecture, or something worse ; *rukhsat*," and Raja Dhyān Singh pushed in to his own apartments, after an absence of seven months, and after a day's journey of thirty *kos* over a rough and hilly country.

What he did when he got there, my information does not state ; whether he kissed his wives and hugged his children, is not therefore for me to say, but presently he emerged from the *zanānah* with the boy, Hera Singh by his side ; he was a lump of a lad, with nothing striking in his features, which were smooth, of ordinary cast, and, if any thing, had a disagreeable pampered expression. He was, however, the pet of him who ruled the Panjāb, and the darling of his father, the wise and calculating Dhyān Singh, who was now indeed a Raja of Rajas ; in that Ranjīt had lately conferred the princely title on the boy, Hera Singh. Emerging from the *anderun* with the boy, and addressing him with every endearing epithet, Dhyān Singh went up to one of the *Halwais*, or confectioners, a score of whom, with their temporary ovens, were hard at work in the inner area of the palace, preparing sweetmeats for distribution to the thousands who would be assembled at the approaching nuptials of the little Raja(*b*). It was indeed for this purpose that the father had obtained leave of absence from court ; and it was in the hope of accomplishing the first wish of his heart, and securing an heir to his house, that he was now about to unite his first born darling to a daughter of one of the oldest families in the hills.

Caressing the child as he walked along, the ambitious father murmured half aloud, " Is it not for thee, my darling, *piārā*, my *tota-myna*, that I do all this ? that I tread the slippery paths of ambition, and watch the pillow of that drivelling dotard ? For thee I toil ; wilt thou ever repay my labors, requite my love ? Oh for one peep into the future !" Then, seeing himself observed, the Raja stopped at one of the ovens, and taking up a piece of *luddu*, put it into the mouth of his boy, who pampered with dainties, unceremoniously rejected the mixture of *ghī*, *mida* and *chini*.

The same night the Raja held secret council with more than one who was little esteemed at the Lahaur *darbar* ; he did not say much, but listened to every opinion expressed, and it was late when he withdrew to his own chamber.

A watch of the night still remained, when the Raja left his couch; he was always an early riser, but now his mind was excited, and after the first snatch of sleep that fatigue procured him, he was unable to close his eyelids(*c*). Ascending therefore the roof of his dwelling, he threw himself on a *charpai*, and seemed long wrapped in thought ever and anon uttering his ruminations aloud.

"Can they be all worlds, those little lamps that twinkle above me? Is each a world larger than this? The *farangis* say so." Again, after a pause, "how often have I watched them! How exactly they return at their appointed season! Some never set—some rise but a short way—some traverse the whole breadth of the sky, but all are constant, all, except those strange wanderers, and Lena Singh can calculate even their movements precisely. Ah! there he is the star of my fate! At whatever hour, whatever season, he is always stationary, burning steadily, though dimly, yes, I would make him the star of my destiny"(*d*).

The Raja was a man of realities, he had in him little poetry and less astronomy, so his soliloquy may appear absurd. But, sleeping much in the open air, and guided in their computation of time, and on their marches, across vast trackless plains, by the motions of the heavenly bodies, Asiatics, even the most illiterate, are better acquainted with the simple laws of nature, or rather with the results of those laws, than many an educated European; I have heard an old cow-keeper's wife assign as a reason for knowing the hour when a robbery was committed, that a certain star was then on the meridian. It was therefore not unnatural that a mind wrought up as Dhyân Singh's now was, should in its heavings strike against the popular and mysterious thoughts connected with the stars.

"Oh for one peep into the future! one glance at those lights as they really are! But, pooh! what connexion have they with my affairs? Can those impostors Muthsadden, and Sandeo Dâs, who practise on the drivelling Ranjît, really tell to-day what shall happen to-morrow(*e*)? They cannot in fact deceive even him, tho' he affects to credit them, to gain popularity. Oh! were I a king! no *fajir* or astrologer, Moslem or Hindu, should infest me! A king indeed! who will be so when *he* dies? Karak Singh would not if he could—Nao Nihal is a lad, but he gives promise of spirit and ability, alas! much more than does my boy! But the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; so the wise

men of the west say ; and so I have seen in those who entered life with me ; I do not see that the active and the daring have gained the mark so often as the cautious and deliberate. The tree requires years to bring it to perfection, and then, an axe in the most ignoble hand may fell it in an hour ! I feel the destiny of my house to be great, but who will tell me whether I am to gain the prize myself, or only open the way to it for my family ? And for *which* of my family ? Oh, if I could rouse my own boy to ambition ! If he lets the prize slip, his uncle will not, and then these plaguy women, I shall make a fresh breach with Sachet Singh by releasing the girl he had his eye on. But never mind, it will suit Gulâh Singh to be on my side, and if it did not, he would find ground of complaint, whatever I might do !”

Rajah Dhyân Singh was nominally a Hindu ; but like most hill men, he knew little of the doctrines of Brâhma ; and had heard much more of the spirit that dwelt in this dell, or the demon that haunted that mountain, than of the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. At court he had been sickened by the buffoonery of religion ; seeing Hindu and Moslem ascetics alike countenanced by the Prince, who called himself a pure Deist, and a disciple and successor of those who shed their blood to found a faith purified from the abuses of Muhammed and of Brâhma ; having seen this, and witnessed the orgies of master and servants, of Monarch and Priests, the Rajah was thoroughly disgusted with all. As a man of understanding, with some intuitive sense of right, he saw the grossness of the ministers of a righteous Being, openly pursuing vice and delighting in obscenity, or even in their sitting in idle self-worship and abstraction. Dhyân Singh's mind, therefore, was a blank as to religion ; and, but that he was devoured by ambition, it would have been a field wherein to sow the seed of truth. By this I am far from meaning that he was a pure-minded man ; I believe he was of the genuine Machiavellian School, one who looked only to the end, reckless of the means. He did not indulge in gratuitous cruelty or injustice, or love the vices for their own sake ; but ambition was his idol, to which he sacrificed present peace and security, and the highest honors a subject could attain ; and scorned all for an object that he could scarcely define to himself, and in the road to the attainment of which his good sense shewed him accumulating difficulties, growing even out of the fulfilment of his present mea-

tures. Yet under the bewitchment of this idol, he scared his conscience to acts, that twenty years before the bold and intelligent Dogur would have died rather than share in(f).

"Well, Colonel *Sahib* ! what think you of this ?" said the *faqir* to me, as he placed in my hand a despatch from Chandu, from which I have chiefly compiled this chapter. I hardly dared to admit the hopes that the communication inspired, but I thanked Aziz-û-dîn from my heart, and waited with increased, but less desponding, impatience the result of our attempt.

NOTES.

(a) The immemorial Eastern custom of approaching a superior with an offering, is to be seen every day in both the Native Courts and European offices in India, on all festivals and great occasions, including Christmas day. Soldiers present the hilt of their sword, in token of their devotion to their master's service; traders bring trays of almonds and sugar-candy, or fresh fruit; civil officials bring a few rupees, laid on a white napkin, and no respectable man approaches without offering a piece of money. The European merely touches the coin with a *salaam*, but outside the door his understrappers are on the look out to fleece the retiring visitors, very possibly say they act by their master's order. *Ghehazi* is a true prototype of the hangers on round English officials.

(b) At a wedding there is no limit to the feasting, but the resources of the bride's parents. A man will spend the earnings of years on these occasions: on a small scale I may mention that I have known a man whose pay was four rupees a month, and who had a large family to support, spend eighty rupees at his daughter's wedding. The proportion may be carried up to the wealthiest in the land, and many instances vastly exceed that scale. I have known a *Musal-mân* feed all of his own faith, amounting to nearly six thousand men, in the town where he lived, on the occasion of his daughter's marriage. Sweetmeats form a most important part of the feast, and the confectioners, with their portable ovens, as described in the text, are generally installed within the centre area, surrounded by dwellings, which forms a part of the common plan for Native houses.

(c) An Eastern practice, familiarly known in the West; the better sort of houses have generally flat roofs, surrounded by ballustrades, where the men sleep in the hot weather. The inhabitants of inferior dwellings, commonly sleep in the street; nor is the practice found dangerous, probably from the universal custom of covering the face during sleep.

(d) The *Rajah* seems to have alluded to the pole star, which he probably believed to be stationary, as to the casual observer, it appears.

(e) Two Pandits, professors of astrology, and treated with great consideration by Ranjit Singh. Every narrative of Indian individuals, from Kings to Thags, inclusive, shews their prevalent superstition: it is difficult to believe the extent to which the daily practice of life is influenced by charms and omens.

(f) The early chapters of this work give some account of Dhyān Singh and his family, now the most influential in the Panjāb, and perhaps hereafter to be connected with British history. Gulāb Singh is the elder brother, and in the family pact he has charge of their conquered territories in the hills: while he manages those of Dhyān Singh, he yearly adds to his own by conquest, or by the terror of his name.—He has over-ran the whole district between Kāshmir and Attok; and inflicted such terrible vengeance on the people of Sūdan (a large district South-East of Mozaffarabād) cutting up, maiming, slaying to the amount it is said of 12,000 persons, that the men of Dūndi and Satti, two adjoining territories, sent in their submission, but begged *not to see his face*. Of course the brothers must unite in this barbarous policy, though it is difficult to believe such horrors of either, seeing their mild and winning demeanour: they are alike too, in their boundless ambition and fathomless duplicity, as wary as they are daring, as little disposed to use force where cunning will succeed, as they are unscrupulous in the employment of violent measures where such seem called for.

Of Gulāb Singh I have heard tales which I can hardly believe myself, and, therefore, will not task my reader's credence with: his information, like that of his brother, is considerable, and though not a very accurate geographer, nor with clear ideas as to the direction in which his Lieutenant, Zorawar Singh, went to push his conquests, he has a good estimate of the wealth and products of China, as well as of Europe. In manner, Gulāb Singh is highly *mild* and affable; his features are good, nose aquiline, and expression pleasing, though rather heavy: indefatigable in business, he sees after every thing himself; hardly able to sign his name, he looks after his own accounts, and often has the very gram for his horses weighed out before him. Since the death of Ranjit Singh, the Rajah has been in bad odour with the *darbār*, for holding out against the present monarch, and with the army, from the numbers killed in his famous defence of the *Saman-bārij*, in the commencement of 1841, as well as from the summary punishment inflicted on the mutineers in Kāshmir: both Gulāb Singh and his brother are, therefore, always surrounded by regiments of their own *Dogar* clan, who serve them in fear and trembling, having their families in the Rajah's hands, and knowing that a *dereliction* from duty would entail torture on them. But Gulāb Singh's history would itself fill a volume; and, if the public give encouragement, some portions of it may appear.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

CONTENTS.

By means of a certain golden talisman, Bellasis has a peep at what is passing at Ráj-ke-kot.—He at length enjoys what is commonly said to make amends for parting, that is, people who have never parted say so.

“ But yet, though Bertram’s hardened look,
Unmoved, could blood and danger brook,
Still worse than apathy, had place
On his swart brow and callous face ;
For evil passions, cherished long,
Had ploughed them with impressions strong.
All that gives gloss to sin,—all gay
Light folly, passed with youth away,
But rooted stood, in manhood’s hour,
The weeds of vice, without the flower,
And yet, the soil in which they grew,
Had it been tamed when life was new,
Had depth and vigour to bring forth,
The harder fruits of virtuous worth.”

Scott.

“ Oh ! how impatience gains upon the soul,
When the long promised hour of bliss draws near !
How slow the tardy minutes seem to roll !
What spect’rs rise, of inconsistent fear !
To the fond, doubting heart, its hopes appear
Too brightly fair, too sweet to realize :
All seem but day-dreams of delight, too dear ;
Strange hopes and fears in painful contest rise,
And the scarce trusted bliss seems but to cheat the eyes.”

Psyche.

I must still keep the thread of my narrative at Ráj-ke-kot, where transactions so important to my happiness were going on, and where every movement of the body politic was laid open to the *faqir’s* inspection, by means of secret agents ; while he and I, and the other satellites in attendance, accompanied the slow march of the Maharajah towards Amritsir.

Before dawn, on the morning after Dhyau Singh's return to his fortress, he was on horseback inspecting the works, commending or blaming, as he deemed expedient, and noticing the slightest new feature in the buildings. He next proceeded to the *top-khana*, and was shewn round by Commandant Fyz Ali, an old one-eyed fellow, already mentioned by Ahmed, the *raj-mistri*. In joint command with him was a dissipated looking European known by the name of John Brown; the two appeared in very bad fellowship, but moved on together to exhibit the guns to their common master. The parade of the battalions followed, when the Rajah retired to his *zanānah* for a few hours, and then took his seat in the Hall of Audience, where he listened to the numerous *arzis* of his followers and subjects, issued orders on various matters, and then summoned to his presence Fyz Ali and John Brown. They entered, the first with an air of independence, the second like a cringing slave. The freedom and the obsequiousness were, or appeared to be, equally unnoticed by the Rajah, who bade them both be seated on the carpet, muttering to himself, "I'm not Frenchman enough yet to keep my Commandants standing."

Fyz Ali had been a trooper in the Bengal Native Horse Artillery, and had accompanied a detachment of that corps to Egypt; he was a smart, intelligent soldier, and rose to the rank of Havildār: he had served some fifteen years, had received several severe wounds, and had also distinguished himself by carrying dispatches through the Mahrāṭṭa camp on two occasions, when the English were hemmed in by their enemies. For such service Fyz Ali looked for promotion, but was told it was not his *lamber*, and daily he saw inferior old men, cowards and malingerers, raised to the post he considered his right: he was a man of family and education, and, being unfortunately a bit of a poet, he once got into a scrape by some doggerel rhymes on the imbecile Commander of his brigade, who, not being able to take up the matter officially, waited his time, and used various devices to bring Fyz Ali within the power of the law, but he had too cautious a hand to deal with. In despair, therefore, of a better opening, his Commander had him brought to a Court Martial for being out of his place at mounted exercise, the charge being magnified into repeated disobedience of orders, in refusing to go into his place. The charge was triumphantly refuted, and splendid testimonials were laid before the

court; acquittal of course followed, but thenceforward Fyz Ali was a marked man, "a Court Martial bird," little indeed, better than a jail one. For a time he tried to stem the torrent, and was nobly supported by his immediate Commanding Officer; but all would not do; and, to save himself from disgrace and ruin, he deserted. Ranjît Singh jumped at such a man; he was instantly made an Adjutant, on three *rupees* a day, and shortly after a Commandant on five; he had instructed a good portion of the Mâharâjah's Artillery men, and drew many a recruit from the Company's troops; but, being a superior man, he was not satisfied with his lot, and felt himself more than ever tied by the leg. Dhyân Singh had long noticed Fyz Ali, and under the influence of that extraordinary partiality, which seemed like a spell over the mind of Ranjît Singh, he had obtained the Artillery man to serve among the troops at Râj-ke-kot; and there, by gratuities and by a display of the little attentions with which he so well knew how to draw to him such minds, he soon converted the mere mercenary into a warm partizan.

John Brown was of a different stamp. The son of an honest labourer in England, he embarked for India a sober, steady lad, liking a mug of home-brewed ale after his day's work, but hardly knowing the taste of spirits. When he took his last look at England, it was with wet eyes, and a lump in his throat, and he thought of the day he should return from "Ingee" with money enough to buy a farm and settle in his native place. On board ship, when the soldier's rations were served, he was obliged, like the rest, to drink his two drams at the tub; at first he took it, as he would medicine, but in the monotonous confinement of a ship life, he very soon learned to look forward to the stimulus, and soon it became needful to him, so that he landed in Calcutta, as thousands of the Company's recruits do yearly, with hardly a thought beyond the grog-shop. Perfectly illiterate, surrounded with profligacy, and without a friend to warn or protect him, he soon fell into the common routine at Dum-Dum, did as little duty as possible, and was drunk as often as he could, got an occasional reprimand or extra drill, and paid off his ill-humour on the first "black fellow" that came in his reach. In this condition he came up the country; when at Kurnaul he was once flogged for being drunk on guard, and while he was still smarting from the punishment, he fell in

with the emissary of a clever scoundrel who had before deserted to Dhyān Singh's service. Brown escaped from his regiment and crossed the Sutluj; at first he was delighted at finding himself as he fancied a rich and independent gentleman, considered as a Commander, and receiving five rupees a day: but he soon found himself a very slave, that he was closely watched, that he must make up his mind to live and die at Rāj-ke-kōt; and, in the event of a siege and any suspicion falling on him, he would be blown from one of his own guns. His tempter was now dead, from the effects of dissipation; and such wretched fellowship as Brown had found with him, was ended; he was now alone on earth, encouraged to spend his pay in profligacy, that he might not save money, and might drown in liquor the remembrance of the country and companions he had quitted for ever. Fyz Ali and he were associated in command, but the proud and independent Mussalman despised the degraded *Kāfir*, and the Golandaz scouted the unclean drunkard. Accustomed to nothing but contumely, and sunk in the mire of vice, too deeply to make any effort to recover himself, Brown became more thoroughly debased than those around him, and was only able mechanically to go through his military work. Dhyān Singh saw and pitied his case, but not liking to turn him adrift, and knowing how far the very name of a European Commandant went, he tried to keep up the credit of the Artillery man. This conduct, however, only exasperated Fyz Ali, without benefiting Brown; he was too far gone to respect himself, and therefore it was too late to make any one else respect him. It may seem strange that the Rājah set any store by such a character, but perhaps, looking on him as a savage animal, he thought that the head that could stand so much liquor must be supported by a stout heart. In the Panjab, intoxication is common, and Dhyān Singh himself, though not a Sikh, frequently drank hard. But more likely, he kept the European as a check on Fyz Ali, who, as the quick eye of his Chief saw, had in him inflammable and dangerous stuff.

I have dwelt at some length on these two men, for they are fair enough specimens of the deserters from the Company's ranks, who are to be found in the Lahaur service, and who leaving a certain competency for what they consider an Eldorado, generally live to find, when too late, that in every particular they have been

deceived, and that in security and comfort they sacrifice, and, in eventual prospects, they forego, far more than they gain in temporary increase of rank and pay.

The two Commandants each wore what might have been a cast-off Horse Artillery jacket, tight breeches of Amritsir *chint*, a red *kamarband*, and a yellow *rumāl*, twisted horizontally and then transversely over the head, forming a low, rakish-looking turban. Thus attired, and with bare feet, the Christian and Moslem sat on the ground, before their Hindu master, who addressing them kindly, recommended unanimity, if not friendship, and then asked them about Ahmed's plans for the fortifications. Brown, half-besotted, had just sense enough to answer that he knew nothing about the matter, to which Fyz Ali assented, with a very significant grunt, and added, "He's a smart fellow, Ahmed Mis-tri, but then, Rājahji, he wants looking after: he is willing and intelligent, but he has no *ilum*, and when he has caught hold of a simple notion, he runs crazy upon it."

"So it seems to me, Fyz Ali, and it was for that reason I sent for you, to ask you to take charge of the works; your pay shall be doubled, and when all is finished you shall have a handsome *khilat*."

"The Rājah is kind, but only on one condition will I take such charge."

"Name it."

"Free permission to do as I like, to pull down and build up at will."

"Peremptory enough, Fyz Ali, but I agree, you understand the business and can be trusted."

The old fellow was delighted, and proceeded to explain his plans, which were much what Ahmed had led before the Rājah, and continued, "But we have not mentioned the ditch, my lord; there must be one at least round every tower to prevent entrance by the low embrazures; these ditches shall be from thirty to sixty feet deep, when we come to water, we will put in alligators and water snakes; and in the dry ones we'll put tigers and all sorts of wild animals; and we can call the towers after the manner of each. There is much in a name, Rājahji, and men would think the *Sher-ki-burj*, or the *Ghuryal-ki-burj*, a more formidable place than the *Saman-burj*.

"Bas, bas, Fyz Ali, you shall have your own way, only don't you run crazy too ;—if you make me such a fortress as I like, you shall have your *khilat*, and all other *parwasti* I can bestow—and if you fail——"

"Then blow me off from one of my own guns"—

"Very well—now you may go, and send Chandu Munshi to me."

The man of pen and ink soon made his appearance ; his master called him to sit near, and motioned all the other attendants to a respectful distance ; they accordingly formed a circle, out of ear-shot of the confidential conversation that followed in a low tone.

After a momentary silence that expressed a hesitation on the part of the Rajah to unbosom himself, and a deference on that of the servant to intrude unbidden on his master's thoughts, the former abruptly commenced ; "yes, they must go, Chandu ; the women shall have their liberty, but I must appear to take no part in the transaction ; the charge shall then be yours to effect their escape, and to do so in such manner that they suffer no injury, and that they be not intercepted before an asylum is gained ; you well understand me Chandu, I must not quarrel with my fiery brother, and though I hate the minion Bellasis, it may be well not to place an unfathomable gulf between us, he's bold and wise, and what's more extraordinary still, he appears to be honest ; friendship therefore with such a man is preferable to hate."

"On the head of thy servant be my master's orders," replied the secretary, "the slave feels assured that he can, without difficulty, execute the commission entrusted to him, and he pledges his head to do so."

"Good, my friend, let not to-morrow's sun rise on their presence in my dominions ; but as for the scoundrel you said brought them here, how ? Did the villain, brother of the wretch Nand Singh, dare to defile my premises, and again venture to mix up my name with his atrocities ? Desire that he be fettered and cast into the darkest of my dungeons, and there fed with the scantiest portion of bread that will sustain life ; I'll teach the miscreant to make me partner in his villainies."

"The order is given, Rajahji, but for one moment would your Highness condescend to see Bhup Singh ? he may, as he says,

make disclosures, which his stubborn spirit after punishment will for ever refuse."

"Stubborn, indeed! there are means to bend less flexible wills than his," and the Rajah's lip curled with an expression not to be misunderstood; "however, shew him to the presence," he added, "We'll hear what he has to urge, I would not punish, even such a dog, unheard."

Chandu waived his hand to an attendant, and whispered in the ear of one, who retired and quickly returned, bringing with him a Sikh of about thirty years of age, whose cool and cruel eye was the only marked feature in his person; but which at once told him to be Nand Singh's brother, the man who attempted to shoot me on the morning of the other's execution, the murderer of Chand Khan, and the ravisher of Mahtab Kowr. The fellow perceived by his reception that all was not right; undaunted, however, he accosted the Rajah as an equal more than superior; more as the one who, though above him in office, was, as a mongrel, or even *asil* Rājput, much below a real Sikh.

"Prosperity attend the great Rajah, the pride of Lahaur, the prop of the Panjab," was his approaching address, but a sharp, brief reproof silenced him, when Chundoo, by the Rajah's order, desired him to say, if indeed he had murdered Chand Khan, and by whose orders he had brought the ladies of Kangra to Raj-ke-Kot, and what were his intentions and expectations in so doing. Brief as were the questions, the fierce culprit could hardly restrain himself to listen to them out, when stamping energetically, he exclaimed, "was I the murderer? and why did I carry off the young girl and the old hag? I killed him to please you, Rajahji, and I brought the lass here for the same reason, and scurvily have I been treated for my pains, not yet paid for the first job, and now, when she is in your hands, you attempt to fix a quarrel on me as recompence for the second, but I have friends, Rajahji, and by the blood of the martyred Govind, I'll have the wench or a thousand ducats for my trouble! for Chand Khan, whose death you call murder, the job was too grateful a one to require heavy payment; a hundred *Nani Shdhies* will therefore satisfy me, but in future I must be paid down and be treated with more consideration, for, by the ashes of my murdered

brother, I like not this questioning, and this parading of the prisoner before your assembled Dogras who are hardly without hearing of such unseemly talk." The Rajah had just patience to hear him out, and then ordered the fellow from his presence into the dungeon already allotted as his abode.

"He's a dangerous villain, that Bhup Singh," remarked the Rajah to his secretary, "he must never again see the daylight; he is both blood-thirsty and incautious, his impetuosity in shooting Bellasis on his public parade should have cost him his life; and from what you have said, though there was address and courage displayed in getting rid of Chand Khan, there was more of foolhardiness than either; and this abstraction of the girl and her mother has been done in bad style, and has been bruited about the country to my no small annoyance. I want no such awkward assistants, give heed therefore to my instructions; and more, make known to Sukhun Lal that in employing Bhup Singh he very much exceeded his orders, and that he deserves, for so doing, to lose his ears, and may yet, if he amend not his ways, reap the reward of his late ill-arrangements in dismissal, if not worse requital; tell him to remember that I hold his sons as hostages, and that, at the least notice of tripping, their fate is sealed." "My master's orders are laws to his servant," replied Chundoo.

After some moments of silence and apparently of deep thought, he resumed, "I don't like these never ceasing hostilities that Zorāwur Singh is carrying on; on all sides they are beset with difficulties; already we have more territory than we can calculate or cover; additions only bring us into neighbourhood with wilder and fiercer tribes who may not only repel us, but turn back the tide of conquest; already but a thin partition separates us from the immense Chinese empire; and another, even less defined, parts us from the *farangis* who look on our hill movements with as much jealousy as does the Durbar; several Europeans have already been prying about the bounds of Ladāk, and Kashmīr has now become a place of resort to them;—we must draw in our horns, Chundoo, or we shall have the *farangis* fingering our possessions."

"True my lord; would that your Highness could so convince the Rajah Golāb Singh."

"Y'es indeed my friend, my brother is obstinate; he can see but one object, and that is, a universal hill dominion; he has seen

so little of the *Darbār*, and talks so little with any but his rude soldiery, that he cannot picture to himself any effectual opposition to his desires, or any impediment that the stroke of a *talwār* cannot remove."

"The Rajah is a great prince, valiant and wise; but he has not the sagacity of my master, who saving his presence, is not as are the Chiefs of the hill or the plain; but is rather as are the Europeans, a diver into futurity; a wise and prudent calculator of events."

"Tush Chundoo, I need not your flattery; keep it for other ears." Slightly disturbed, the Secretary sunk back for a moment into silence, and then rejoined: "If my master were to send the Rajah Suchet Singh to co-operate with Zorāwar Singh, matters might be retarded; the young Rajah is fiery, and would not brook a second place, while the old *Vasir* would not tamely yield the precedence; and between the conflicting pretensions, your Highness's desires would be effected, and further conquests at least retarded, if not prevented."

"A capital idea Chundoo, you deserve reward, and shall have a *kālat* for so bright an expedient; but my time is short, to-morrow I must be on my way to Rupar, and the day is already on the wane; so see to the ladies, and report to me when you have them fairly under weigh."

The purport of the above was pretty faithfully reported to me; and, what was more to the point, I received within a few days an anonymous letter, intimating that, if I proceeded to Amritsir, I should, in a house specified, find the object of my desires; the letter went on to say that, as doubts might arise in my mind, and I might fear to trust myself at Amritsir on the bidding of an unsigned *khut*, Sodhi Kurtar Singh, a holy man in attendance on the Maharajah, was in full possession of the circumstances both of my case and of that of the writer, and would guarantee my safety and the fulfilment of the object of my journey. With the document in my hand I flew to the old *fagir*, and questioned him as to the Sodhi: "He's a holy man, my friend, but what occasion has a Christian to deal with a Sikh priest?" "Read *fagirji*," was my reply, and I thrust the letter into his hand; he perused it calmly, word by word, and then again examined the paper, and his lynx

eye appeared to pierce it through and through : while he uttered half aloud, " the document is a true, though a strange enough one ; the Sodhi is a good man, and would not fix his name in treachery ; nor would any mean villain dare to attach Kurtar Singh's name to scheme of ill ; I'll accompany you, my friend, to the Sodhi's *derah*, and hear what he has to say, and if he guarantees your safety, it only remains to gain the Maharajah's permission, and to speed you on your way."

The *faqir* called for his elephant, and I mounting my good steed Chānda, we moved to the dwelling of the Sodhi, whom, though in the immediate neighbourhood of the court, I had not yet seen, the fact being that, though in high repute and favour, the priest was really too respectable a man to enjoy the society of such as met in the pavilion of Ranjit.

As we approached the royal purlieus, we perceived a venerable Sikh seated on the ground, under a small *shamīyāna*, in front of a still smaller *routes*; five *chelahs* were sitting respectfully before him, as the old man read from a large volume, on which he was so intent that he did not perceive the approach of our train; the *faqir* beckoned to me not to disturb the reading, so we waited for a minute or more, until the *sodhi*, looking up, perceived us and our attendants crowding around : courteously he arose, and shutting his holy book, bade us be seated on the carpet by his side, and requested that we would state the object of our visit.

Faqir Azizudin drew the letter from his waist, when the *sodhi*, taking a *fac simile* from a side pocket, placed it in my hands : " The *Sāhib* reads Persian, and will perceive that the poor *sodhi* is in full possession of his secret, the fame of Colonel Bellasis has reached even my retreat, ask if I, a poor descendant of *Govindji*, can further the *Sāhib's* desires, I shall be proud and happy ; all is prepared, the Maharajah's consent has been obtained for the Colonel *Sāhib* to precede the camp ; horses and escort are already at every stage, and two more suns may see my friend at Amritsir." I resolved to start at the third watch of the night, and taking from him some brief directions regarding my safety, and receiving an amulet with his name engraved on it which, in case of need, I was to shew, I prepared to depart, as I wished to pay my respects to the Maharajah, and make some other arrangement : but the *sodhi* stopped me until he could call a retainer, in whose especial charge I was

to proceed; Koony Singh was a *sodhi* too, and receiving me in charge from his patron and kinsman, as he would a bale of Kāshmir shawls, promised to carry me safely to Amritsir, and thence to attend to my desires; my protector was a funny fellow, of whom I may speak more anon: but now, warmly thanking my new friends, and hardly remembering the *faqir's* presence I was hurrying away. "Not so fast *Sāhib*" uttered Azizudin, half annoyed at my thus throwing him overboard; "you have not yet done with me, and may need my good offices with the Maharajah, so why discard me so hastily?" Clumsily enough I excused my rudeness, and the *faqir* smiled, and observed that it was excusable in one who was love-smitten. We hastened to the presence, and there I had to endure one coarse speech; but, not admitting of another, I interrupted his Highness, and told him that, though we did not veil or lock up our female relatives, we held all thoughts regarding them as pure as could Sikh, Hindoo, or Moslem; the Monarch took the rebuff in good part, and asked if he could more directly further my wishes, that already a *paricānah* had been issued to forward me at the royal expence, and a *ziyafāt* of three thousand ducats to await my arrival at Amritsir. I thanked him for his kindness, and said I would ask one other favor, that he would write to Captain Wade to assist any clergyman, who might be at Ludiāna, to come dawk to Amritsir, to marry me there to Māhtab Kowr; Ranjīt Singh was amused at the idea, but good naturedly consented, and forthwith ordered a *khareestāh* to be prepared, asking that a *Padri* might be despatched with all haste, and that he would find a palanquin dawk and escort laid for him from Filor ghāt to Amritsir.

I wrote to the same effect to Captain Wade and enclosed a letter that was to be delivered to any Minister of the Protestant faith that might be at Ludiana; excusing myself for the sudden and urgent call, and entreating that he would, with the least possible delay, join me at Amritsir.

Having myself seen these letters and the Maharajah's *murasalāh* despatched, I returned to my quarters, and put my affairs in such train that, should any accident befall me, my little property should fall into the hands of those for whom it was intended; in such employment I spent some hours, and then had a farewell interview with some of my Kangra officials who now, with real grief,

saw my preparations for departure, not perhaps from any personal affection for me, but at losing one who had protected and fostered them; and under whose care their business had thriven; the rumour of my departure had little time to spread, but there were nevertheless many of the traders and other inhabitants of Kāngra who had accompanied the camp, assembled at my tent that night; and some of the protestations and prayers in my behalf came, I do believe, from the heart; and well they might, for, saving the legal rights of Government, (one-third of the crop) nothing had, during my short reign, been taken from the cultivator, who, for once at least in the Labāur territory, had reaped where he had sown, and had been able to calculate on the fruits of his own field. To keep the *Tuhsildars* and *Macharis* entirely from the *samindar*, and to save him from all domiciliary visits had been my great object; I therefore purposely omitted to collect the repts by the usual system of one rate on this produce, another on that; so much on the cow, buffalo, or calf, and so much for each *pagri*, (a capitation tax being in the Panjab as elsewhere one most ruinous to the interests both of Government and subject). I had made my calculations, and, perceiving that the impost for which I was responsible could easily be realized by taking one-third on all fields, whether of grain or other crops, I early promised that such should be my limit, and that, at the option of the cultivator, the division should be made by arbitrators, one on the part of Government, and one from the *samindars*, they two, choosing the third assessor; the owner of each field was also at liberty to choose between a *kunkoot* or *batae* division; that is, whether Government should take a third of the grain when cleared, or a third of the standing crop; the system answered so well that I seldom or never had complaints, and the cultivation of Kāngra doubled under my administration. Forgive, gentle reader, this digression, but it is needful to shew why and how there could be so strange a fact as real regret on parting, between the Governor and the governed.

My tent was hardly cleared by midnight, and with the loud cries and prayers of my subjects still ringing in my ears, I threw myself on my *chārpāi*, but it was not to sleep; and when, faithful to the moment, my *poshkidmat* came to tell me that the *ghari* had told the expiration of the third watch, I arose unrefreshed, and with a feverish throbbing at my temples that told the

disturbed and anxious state of my mind; but, wasting no time, and hastily performing my ablutions and forcing a *chapâti* and cup of "eau sucrée" down my throat, I pushed my way through the crowd that still beset my door-way, threw myself on my horse, and at a quick canter set forth on my pilgrimage of love.

For some miles, without change of word I rode; the morning air was chilly, and as the cold currents came down from the hills, I was glad to draw my *labada* closely around me, and by keeping my good horse in rapid motion to cause my stagnating blood to flow; the morning was one of those beautifully clear ones that after the breaking up of the periodical rains often ushers in the cold weather; the moon was young, and had therefore set, but the heavens sparkled with a thousand lamps, each brighter than the other, and that quite sufficiently lighted my way; looking around, I perceived that I had eight companions, two of the *klas ghorchurras*, the Sodhi Koony Singh, and a companion of his own; and then there were my *peshkhidmut* and three of my household; all good men and true, bearing my buckler and bow in the field, or preparing my rude food, or mattress in the camp; the eighth was a mounted guide, a most necessary person in the Panjab; for even with one, we were often at a loss, and my other attendants would have, in all innocence, ridden in any direction I chose to take them; indeed more than once I did amuse myself by going quite right about, just to see if I should be followed, and true enough, all hands, guide and all, pelted after me as if in full view of Amritsir; and it was very often that I had to tell our leader that Amritsir lay nearly south-west, whereas we were going in any direction but that; by day-light, however, with the regular relays at seven *kos* intervals, arranged by my mysterious correspondent, we had made good some thirty miles, and considerably before midday had reached Dinanagger, a large cantonment and town on a branch of the Râvi, and a favourite place of resort of the Maharajah's during the hot months. We had now ridden eighty miles, and though I, accustomed to long excursions and rapid movements, and now provided with relays of horses, did not at all feel fatigued, but was urgent to reach Amritsir, my followers having no such inducements as I had, felt both hungry and tired; we, therefore, called a halt for an hour, and reluctantly I awaited their will, and, seated on a rude *charpai*; gazed intently towards Amritsir, or

beating my boots with my riding whip, I counted the minutes that I was detained, and shortly after midday was, to my delight, again in my saddle.

Our direction had, during the morning, been under the low range of the Kāngra and Nurpur hills, and parallel to the course of the river Byās, before it emerges from the last break in the range that runs past Rupar, by Nandpur Makhowul, towards Nurpur; hitherto the river was a rapid and noisy torrent, rolling over boulders of all sizes; but as I left its track and stretched westward towards Dinanaggar, the stream had already lost its mountain character, and was assuming the usual placid aspect of the Pānjāb rivers; not that in any part, until it joins the Sutluj, does it acquire the muddy hue of the river, which it flows into with a comparatively deep and blue current.

At Dinanaggar I scarce glanced at the Rāvi, and immediately giving it a wide berth on my right, we dashed along the Amritsir road keeping the Hussalee canal on our left; the country seemed to me as I rapidly rode along, to have improved in cultivation since I last passed, and with a strong recollection of localities, I called to mind as I hurried by, the occurrences of my upward march to Kāngra; the insidious attentions of Nand Singh and the every-day traits of Sikh character that then, as new, so much affected me.

Such recollections glanced through my mind as some recognized object fell on my eye; but my thoughts were on her I was to meet at Amritsir, and though my mind was much relieved as to her well-being, there was still a remnant of fear and doubt remaining.

The evening shadows were lengthening as I approached Butala, the abode of the Kowr Shere Singh, where, with a prudent reserve, the Prince kept himself aloof from the complicated politics of the day; and where, with a more questionable policy, he spent his days in sporting and his nights in debauchery; I had but once seen him, and had then been treated courteously; I therefore thought it not right to pass his door without the formality of a visit, and when near at hand, sent a message that though in a hurry, and on important business, I would if permitted, pay my respects, and for one moment attend on the Maharajah's son; a gracious message was returned by a Mutamad of the Kowr's, whom I bade to turn about, and shew me to his master's hall.

Booted and spurred, I rode up to an open pavilion where, in luxurious guise, the Prince was enjoying the afternoon's air; he received me with much favor, expressed himself an admirer of Europeans, and declared his especial regard for the character I had earned at Kāngra; he asked the purport of my long and rapid journey, at such a juncture, when my presence was so much required? I told him plainly, why I was going, and said that I should still be in time for the Rapar conference.

The Prince was much amused; he however made more civilized remarks than did his reputed father; and calling to the Commandant of his Body Guard, he desired that a Squadron of twenty picked men should accompany me, and a like number immediately proceed half way to Amritsir and there await my coming, and escort me into the city.

I thanked the Kowr, but declined the escort, and told him that it would only detain me, that I was most anxious to proceed, and had already ample guard in the *Gurcharas*, the Sodhi and my own people.

"Ah *Sahib*, you look too much to the word of a Sodhi; believe me they are not all to be trusted; and I have lived to see the safeguard of both Beidi and Sodhi violated; rely on it that a few good *talwars* are better guard than the pass of the high priest Bikramajit himself: besides, there are many Akālis about Butala, and more about Amritsir, gathering like fowl birds for the approaching Dusserah, and you know they care not for the Maharajah himself, much less for Bāba, Bhae or Sodhi *Sahib*."

At another time I should have disregarded the friendly advice, but now I had an object in view that enjoined all necessary caution; I therefore accepted the kindly aid, and partaking of a slight refreshment, I again, after repeating my thanks, threw myself on the horse prepared for me, and through crowds of gazing Sikh soldiers (more than one of whose wild eye and blue attire told me, as did his coarse language, that he was an Akali) I passed along at such pace that I was in an instant beyond reach of insult or injury.

My train now mustered twenty-eight souls, our speed, therefore, soon slackened, for I saw that if I continued my present pace, I had good chance of riding alone into Amritsir.

One watch of the night had passed, and I had now, with the exception of about two hours' halt between Dinnanagar and Butala, been eighteen hours in the saddle, and ridden over one hundred and fifty miles of country, when the walls of Gobindgurh, with the young moon glancing from behind it, suddenly opened on my view. Amritsir and Gobindgurh have often been described; I will, therefore, leave the holy tank and the religious capital of the Sikhs to the reader's imagination, as I will the supposed countless hoards of money there amassed; besides, I had little thought at the time for other treasure than my own, and little ability or desire to meditate on aught but the lost and recovered flower of Kāngra.

NOTES.

(a) Promotion, in the Indo-British army a few years ago, went almost entirely by seniority: some improvement has recently been made, but nevertheless Fyz Ali's story is not all fiction, nor is it long since a gallant officer lived, who might possibly have recognized the tale as fact.

(b) Here again I gladly bear testimony to an improved state of things, though enough of evil remains to call for further interference. It is Maria Edgeworth I think, who says, "physicians are abundantly diffuse and exact when describing symptoms, but surprisingly brief when they come to treat of remedies." I would not be one of these Doctors, nor would I dwell needlessly on defects inherent to the world we live in; but it is laziness and not contentment to put up with evils which may be remedied. No man could have seen a detachment of recruits march through Calcutta ten or fifteen years ago, without earnestly deprecating the plan adopted with newly landed European soldiers, in every thing connected with their comfort and morals. Her Majesty's officers are becoming more rational, but I have seen a newly-arrived regiment undergoing a full-dress parade in Fort William, in April and May. The vice and mortality, arising from injudicious arrangements, are frightful, and pretty nearly equal in the three Presidencies. Considerations of finance as well as of humanity might open the eyes of those in authority to the advantage of locating their European troops in the hill stations, with such facilities for communication as might enable the men to be brought down speedily on any emergency. The rivers present the readiest highway from the mountains; and a few small, powerful steam tugs, with well constructed flats, would supersede the necessity for three-fourths of the plain stations for European troops. The first outlay would be considerable, but in ten years the expence would be covered by the saving of life; and who can estimate the advantage to the minds of the men? or the additional honor to the European character, if rescued from the stain of intoxication and its attendant vices? As to service, surely a regiment fresh from the hills would be worth two that had been demoralized and parboiled in the plains.

(c) A *Khillat* is a dress of honor; *Parcasti* is the favoritism that knaves ask and fools bestow, or that fools ask and knaves bestow, whichever the reader pleases. Folly and knavery there must be in an office where *parcasti* abounds.

(d) The Sodhis, claiming descent from the founder of the Sikh religion, are generally treated with respect, and, in the P^{an}jab as merchants and traders, are exempted from half tolls, a privilege of which they frequently take advantage, by officiating as carriers for others, and "receiving the difference," as the horse guards say. This is a case of *parwasti*, illustrating the preceding note.

(e) Phillor is the ferry, opposite to the military station of Ludiana; there is a brick fort, formed from one of the old royal Serais looking with its minars like a congregation of chimneys. Ranjit set much store by the place, though even in its triple wall, and scarped ditch it is of little strength, and good only against a coup de main. The fort does not command the ferry; it belongs I believe to the Aluwalla Chief; though a Royal Post is maintained at it, the fort and ghât is now under the orders of Lena Singh Majetia.

(f) Native officials always claim free quarters, and their highest enjoyment is to be out in the district living on the fat of the land. *Tehsildâr* is the native Collector, ten or twelve of whom are in each of the Company's districts, subordinate to the European officer; they are now generally well paid, receiving from £200 to £300 per annum, as salary, but their actual incomes are often treble that sum. If honest, they are content with a *nazzar* at the two great festivals of the year, which doubles their salary. *Muskari* is an extra inferior, executive officer, the lowest class of all; he executes decrees, and seldom is paid more than seven or eight shillings a month from Government; the proportion of his salary and actual income being about the same as existed between the salary and emoluments of all officials in the days of Lord Clive, when a Collector received a hundred pounds or so per annum, salary, and realized a large fortune in ten or twenty years.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

CONTENTS.

The grand event with which this book ought properly to terminate.—Steel is a better metal than gold.—A modern Agesilaus.

"Think'st thou my heart its loved one hath not found?
 Yes! we are one, oh! trust me we have met!
 Where nought again may part what love hath bound,
 Where falls no tear, and whispers no regret."

Schiller.

"I saw the Rajah armed for war,
 I saw his chieftains gathering round;
 I saw his banner like a star,
 I heard his trumpets stormy sound,
 On rushed they, like the rushing sea!
 I took my lute, and sang to thee!"

Croly.

If the reader has ever been, for long years, separated from the object of his love; or if even the absence of a month or week has brought to his heart nights of weariness, and days of desolation, he can understand my feelings when, rescued from such a tissue of dangers, I clasped my bride to my heart, and heard in her own sweet words, the touching narration of her perils, and of the process, to her quite incomprehensible, by which she was released. To the reader of these pages, who has been in such a position, the filling up of the blank in this part of my story will be no difficult task; and to all the rest of the world, any thing I might write would seem mawkish, so I will even let them settle the matter in their own minds as they may think most proper; and will pass on from matters of sentiment to details of fact.

Having recovered my treasure, I was resolved that there should "nought but death part her and me." Mahtab had long seen the absurdity, and, worse than absurdity, of the religion she had been reared in, and was prepared by her natural rectitude and purity, to

embrace a better faith as soon as it should be presented to her. I felt my own incompetence to be her instructor, and never was so conscious of the discrepancies between my own belief and practice as when I sought to lay before her the principles of Christianity. The research that we together made into the elements of Christian truth, was not, I hope, without use to me, and ended in my bride becoming in heart and soul a convert. Her mother offered no opposition to the change—all that Māhtab did was right in her parent's eye, and sickness and sorrow had so impaired her natural energies that she was little more than a passive witness of events.

When the clergyman, whose services I had requested, arrived at Amritsir, the Rāni offered no opposition to our wishes; and I was united to Māhtab Kowr, by Christian rites, in the presence of God and man.

The old lady did but live to see her child entrusted to a faithful guardian; in a few days she expired, and now indeed Māhtab was all my own; we had neither of us any other creature on earth to claim our affections; and how they were centred on each other, I will not attempt to describe.

The crowning of my good fortune I considered to be, that the Maharajah permitted my proceeding to Rūpar by water, instead of marching with his camp, escaping thereby the bustle of the royal cortège, and substituting for it the quiet and privacy of a river trip.

Having had two boats fitted up at the nearest *ghat*, we embarked on the Byās, and dropped down the stream until at Hurree-ke-Putun it joins the Sutluj.

The rivers of the Panjāb have had few describers from the days of Sikandar the Great to those of Sikandar Burnes, but about the time my narrative commences, attention had been excited towards them and their capabilities; during this very year Captain Burnes had navigated from the ocean to Lahaur, ascending the Rāvi the most winding, intricate and shallow of the five rivers; Captain Wade had made an excursion down the Sutluj, and I was perhaps the first of European blood that had embarked on the Byās, whose bright blue waters seemed unwilling to mingle with the Sutluj's muddy stream.

The boats of the Sutluj and Byās are very primitive structures, in shape resembling what I remember in civilized life, as a snuf-

fers-tray, and in workmanship, the clumsiest that can be imagined. These great flat-bottomed vessels are chiefly used as ferries, and for longer trips there are the Indus boats, of somewhat better build, but still awkward and clumsy. These unpromising looking craft, however, navigate safely to the very mouth of the river, and are far more comfortable habitations than many a better looking build. We had embarked in one of the latter, fitted up with a large cabin, formed of *sirki*, a fine and polished reed that abounds on the river banks. The stems are laid parallel to each other, and threads passed through them, at intervals of about a foot, and thus a mat is formed which is used for innumerable purposes; it is light and strong, and keeps out both sun and rain.

The mode of working the Indus boats is as little ship-shape as their build, yet it, too, answers all the purposes required. One huge sail, with bamboos tied together for yards, is hoisted on a rough and far from perpendicular mast, when the breeze is favorable. But the main dependence for progress in descending is the force of the current, and, in ascending, the long rope by which the vessel is tracked. The *mullahs* are Musalmāns, here a hard-working and light-hearted race; many of them very fine-looking men; absolutely amphibious in their habits, they are to be seen through heat and cold, diving, swimming, wading, dragging; and ever and anon a huge pair of bare legs, dripping with moisture, are thrust in at the cabin window, as the *mullah* enters to caulk a leaky seam in the boat. One man was all day busy at the mill, grinding the wheat for the evening's meal of the whole party, and the ceaseless noise was very disagreeable; I was always obliged to recollect that the inconvenience of doing without food *might* be greater to them, than that of hearing the noise was to me, and thus to check the order to stop the mill that was constantly rising to my lips.

Our voyage was monotonous, and had we not been together, would have been dull. The banks are generally low and sandy, and the principal features of the river are never ending sand banks.

From its quitting the hills to its outlet, the Indus, in all its branches, flows through a plain that appears to have no inclination beyond what it may derive from the figure of the earth: but the force of the current proves that, there is a vast, though gradual, descent throughout its career. No river, I suppose in the world, is so variable in its course as the Sutluj, and its wanderings cause

many a bitter feud. A single season often changes the bed of the river several miles; and crops, that are sown in the territory on one side of the stream, may ripen in the dominions on the opposite; seeming as if the very elements partook of man's instability in this troubled region. As we tracked along the Sutlaj, seeing very often nothing but a tract of sand on either side, between us and the horizon, it seemed as if the grey waters beneath, and the grey sky above, were but one expanse, with a brown line drawn across it. There is no time when a wild desert plain looks sublime, except when the yellow full moon is rising on it, and then there is an air of vastness and mystery over the expanse.

I hardly knew myself in the perfect tranquillity of this period, having never since I reached manhood, had such a calm in my existence. Of course I should, after a time, have felt *ennui*; but our trip did not last long enough to wear out the charm, and I look back to it as a time of the purest enjoyment.

One calm, bright, cool evening we were moored off Tihara, on the left bank of the stream. In other parts of India the place would have been nothing remarkable, but in the surrounding desert it was quite an oasis. A grove of *sissu* trees extended for a mile or two, and though none of the trees were large, the verdure and shade were most refreshing. Mahtab and I had wandered some distance, and sat down on the stump of an old tree, looking at the wild peacocks flying past, listening to the thousand doves that had their habitation in the surrounding branches, and wondering who had planted the grove. An old man, with a long white beard, passed at some little distance from us, and paused for a moment, leaning on his staff as he saluted us. I salaamed to him in return, and beckoned him to approach. "His age was like a vigorous winter, frosty but kindly," and there was something about him that seemed to me familiar. I asked the old man his name, which he said was Hosein Sháh; he told us he was a *faqir*, that he had collected money enough to repair an old *Bedgah* in the grove, and to dig a well there, for the refreshment of travellers. We accompanied the old man to his habitation, a small mat hovel in the heart of the wood. Close by was the *Bedgah*, fresh, white and clean, and the neatly-finished well gave promise of refreshment. Some trees of a larger growth than the surrounding *babul* and *sissu* shaded the spot, and a clump of dates made a picturesque va-

riety in the foliage. The hermit of this cell was quite unlike the usual class of *sufis*; he talked soberly and civilly, asked no alms, and was clean and simple in his dress. Still, as he talked, some remembrance haunted me, but as he shewed no symptom of recognition, I concluded that I must be mistaken in the vague idea which possessed me, that I had seen him before.

We continued our voyage next morning, and, for a week, had little in the external world to claim our attention, except the increasing clearness of the views of the hills. During the day they were not visible, but in clear weather, we had glimpses of them, morning and evening, as if the sky had opened to reveal to us a new world. Our course lay occasionally through banks, well cultivated, but except at the ferries, we rarely saw an inhabitant. At the *ghats* there were picturesque groups of travellers, standing and sitting on the bank, or in the flat-bottomed boats, as if they had been arranged by a painter. Here a Sikh soldier, all beard and swagger, with his European red jacket, and high, narrow, characteristic turban—conspicuous even at a distance by his white teeth, a beauty that the tribe preserves unsullied by their abstinence from tobacco. Or there would be a tall, wiry Singh, a *shikari* of the *Māharajah's*, with a long knife in his girdle, a matchlock poised on his shoulder, and a scarlet powder horn by his side, with a jacket of tiger's skin round his gaunt shoulders. Perhaps one of the passengers would be a *Brahman* traveller, with his quiet, sly, subdued countenance, and white beard, as strong a contrast to the overbearing air and black *mans* of the Singhs (who mostly dye their beard when it begins to grizzle) as his loose muslin garments and ample turban were to their tightly girded costume. We passed many places on the Panjāb side, which shewed remains of habitations, and here there was but one reply. "It was a Mussalman village,—the Sikhs plundered and left it desolate."

I can fancy nothing more delightful than the climate on the *Satluj*, during the beginning and the end of the cold season: and as we advanced Northward, we found the scenery equally lovely—the *Himalāyas* forming a noble amphitheatre to the North and Northwest; the plains at their base, green and well cultivated, and the river frequently stretching into a wide expanse, to which the abrupt turns gave a lake-like appearance.

One early morning we had gone out to enjoy the delightful

breeze ;—" *eating* the air" is, indeed, the fittest term to apply to the eagerness with which a temperate and bracing climate is relished by those who have endured the heat of the plains. The mist rose in a white cloud from the river, but the sky behind the blue hills to the East, was of a clear red. Presently a spark of fire appeared above one of the peaks, and in two minutes more, the sun leaped forth, throwing a column of crimson light on the grey waters of the Sutluj. Beyond, and to the left of the low undulating ridge before us, rose chain after chain in endless succession, backed by the snowy pinnacles, which, in the morning light, stood up, white and cliff-like, their sides seamed apparently by deep, and nearly perpendicular ravines ; but as the day advanced, all was merged into one soft, mottled, blue and white haze.

The encreasing heat of the sun made us look out for our boat, which was tracking along-side, when we were arrested by the approach of two travellers, who evidently were in quest of us. In the first, we immediately recognized Akram Khan the Multani ; and in the other, the hermit of Tihara ; we were delighted to see our faithful servant, of whom we had had no certain intelligence since the day he had left Kangra for Raj-ke-kot. His tale was soon told, that he had lingered about Mahtab's prison, vainly seeking for some means of introducing himself, until he learned that the bird was flown. Not knowing the cause of her removal, he feared some fresh disaster, and hastened to Kangra in quest of me. There too, he was disappointed, finding me gone ; but he followed my steps to Amritsir, and at that city gathered enough to lead him to hope that I had found Mahtab. Thence he had pursued me to Chowndee-ke-ghat, where we now were. I told him that I had not forgotten my promise, that his services should not go unrewarded, and desired him now to get into one of the boats ; " but what," I asked, " is the old *faqir* from Tihara doing here ?"

" Will the *Sahib* allow him to accompany me into the boat ?"

" Certainly," and I again looked at the old man with an increasing assurance that I had before known him. However I postponed my investigations, as the travellers were tired and hungry ; told them to eat and sleep, and that in the evening we would have a conversation.

The sun was sinking behind the low land to our West, and one

of the wide, lake-like bends of the river was glowing like a topaz — the huge, clumsy, dark sail that had been hoisted to our boat, and was still unstruck, looked picturesque in that subdued light which throws so strange a beauty over the commonest objects; we had brought to early, and I was walking along-side of Mahtab's *doli* on the high, turfy bank, when Akram Khan came to make his *salam*. I immediately enquired about the *faqir*.

"The *Sahib* then does not recognize Ram Singh?" replied the Multani.

"To be sure I do! How stupid not at once to see through his disguise! But what is the meaning of all this mummering?" My old soldier in reply gave the following narrative:—

"On the night of Chand Khan's murder he had lain down to rest as usual, under guard, with his fellow detenu old Ram Singh, (who now standing before me and divesting himself of his *faqir* habiliments, I was surprised I had not before recognized.) The latter was awakened by finding a bandage forcibly applied to his mouth, and hearing a deep low voice commanding him to rise and accompany the speaker. Before the old man was well awake, he was blindfolded, and led away by two stout fellows; unable to speak or see, he could make no resistance, nor did he know by what road he went, or by what companions he was accompanied for several hours. He was tied on a horse, and led along at a gallop till the whole party were weary; and then, when taken down and allowed to use his mouth and eyes, he found himself still pinioned,—out of sight of Kāngrā, or any other object that he recognized, and surrounded by a band of ruffianly Sikhs. One, who seemed the leader, he described as particularly ferocious, and as having his hands and his *kammarband* smeared with blood. Rām Singh gathered from their conversation, that they were proceeding to Lahaur, where he was to be given up prisoner, and he knew what sort of fate would there await him. Famishing and desperate, the old man asked for some food, when the brutal leader flung an old shoe at him, and said with a sneer, "there, you may make your breakfast on that. I have lost the fellow to it." The old man had not been a jailor without learning something of the laws of evidence, and when his arms were a little loosened, to enable him to eat the scanty fare afterwards given to him, he made himself master of the shoe.

The party proceeded for some days ; and then, when they were one night plunged in a debauch, Rām Singh effected his escape. He wandered, almost starving, as a *faqir*, till he reached the Sut-luj, and crossed into the British territory.

There he felt comparatively safe, and having in his wanderings seen the old deserted *masjid* at Tihara, he resolved to assume the name and character of a Musalmān, and take up his abode beside it. Under the name of Hassan Shāh, he begged a sum sufficient to repair the ruin, and then settled himself in the retreat. Amid his wanderings, he had always kept possession of the old shoe, but he was dismayed one morning at not finding it ; he could not account for its loss ;—a traveller had taken shelter with him the preceding night, but what stranger would purloin anything so apparently worthless ?

Rām Singh had continued this peaceable life till the time when we visited his abode, and was much pleased to find I did not detect him. Soon, after, however, Akram Khān, on his way in pursuit of me, begged a night's lodging from the *faqir* of Tihara : the old man knew he could trust his visitor, and accordingly discovered himself, and they both set out next morning in quest of me.

I was indeed much pleased to see the old man, whom I had long supposed murdered ; but I advised him, if he accompanied us to Rupar, there to maintain his disguise. Putting his tale in connexion with what Sohun Lāl had begun to tell me, I began to find some clue to Chānd Khān's murderer ; for at that time, the reader must remember, I was not in possession of all those details which I have anticipated in the preceding chapter, to keep up the thread of my narrative.

In two days more, we reached Rupar, a ruinous and depopulated town, standing on the verge of the Khādir at the left bank of the Sutluj. But all now looked gay and splendid with the British encampment gleaming out from among the trees and turrets of the Rupar bank ; while on the wide flat sand that stretched on the other side from the brink of the stream up to the first low, but abrupt chain of hills, lay Ranjīt Singh and his chivalry. I hastened to my quarters, and was next day admitted to present my *nazar* to the Mahārāja ; and having made all arrangements for the privacy and security of my *zanana*, I set myself wholly to my professional work.

The splendours of that gorgeous meeting are too fresh in public recollection to require repetition here. For the time, I got into the spirit of the affair, and really enjoyed the fine appearance the Lahaur troops made, although I was too well acquainted with the genuine nature of the material they were composed of, to be blinded by the show.

What took place at the confidential interviews between the Eastern and Western Potentates, I cannot say, not having been present; what was said by the King and the Lord, or how *faqir Aziz-ud-din* tried to fathom Mr. Prinsep, and how the latter thought he had blinded the former, remain for the future historian of the extraordinary connection that so long subsisted between two Governments, agreeing in nothing but in making fine speeches to each other; that the friends of the one should be the heart's delight of the other, and that all who dared to look askance at the Briton were to be exterminated by the Sikh, whose enemies again were to be made minced-meat of by the Lords of Hindustân.

What was the ostensible object of the gorgeous scene now displayed, I am at a loss exactly to know; it seemed that the British Government wanted something, they did not quite like to say what, or perhaps they hardly knew themselves; but one thing was evident, that the successors of the Mughal, Lords of the greatest empire the world has ever yet seen, courted the alliance of an upstart robber; for after all, and stripping him of his tinsel, what was he more than a Bandit on a large scale? One plundering by wholesale, and never compensating for temporary spoliation by subsequent good management, but in common with other destroyers of the human race looking on the gold of the traders as his own, and considering that ryots were made only to be squeezed, and corn fields to be reaped—but not by those who sowed them.

Ranjit Singh more than once consulted me while at Ruper as to any possible treachery that might be intended, and also asked my opinion as to the relative merits of his troops and those of the English that were present; I set his mind at ease on the first point, and on the other told him, with my usual openness, that the body of Lancers in the Governor-General's camp could ride through his cavalry, (a) and that the European regiment, if needed, would stand to be mowed down by his guns until not a man remained. And further, that the example of such men, and the *esprit d'armée* had

spread throughout the Native Army, and that consequently there are Sepahi corps that have done and would again do, as the best of the Europeans. "But," replied Ranjit, "my men are the same, or finer, and hardier and more inured to battle." "Forgive me," I would reply, "but they have no rallying point, nothing that if scattered to-day, would bring them together to-morrow; suppose that in battle your Highness *ch'hata* (far be the day!) was to fall, who, in the absence of Raja Dhyān Singh, would lead? or whom would the troops obey?" "Ah, Bellasis, you look gloomily on my power; I like to hear you say what you think, but let it be to me alone, such opinions would not do to be spread, for I do not look to end my empire in my own person, but rather expect that it will extend to *Kāsi*. The *brāhmans* at least tell me that it is destined to embrace the holy city, and that the banner of Govind will yet wave over the mosques that have been permitted to defile the city of the gods."

"Banāras is very far (*b*), your Highness, within the boundary of the Europeans; it is as far as from Jowāla Mukhi to the Atak and back again."

"Oh, I know very well where *Kāsi* lies, and I don't pretend to expect that I shall wrest it from the *farangi*; but there is no knowing what may happen; they may give it to me, they complain that it is only Bengal that pays them, that the Upper Provinces only bring expence, and that the revenues of the Duāb and Delhi are swallowed up in their outlays. But have I not twenty thousand men at this moment present, while Lord Bentinck has scarcely two? surely there is no such difference between us but that, by a night attack, I could destroy his escort, and seize his person; would they not then ransom him by the transfer of a province, or even by a gift of the lands down to the Jamna which are mine by right, won by my sword?"

"Such enterprize would surely fail, for the English do not sleep in the neighbourhood of an army, such as your Majesty's, without ample security against surprize; besides, if you took Governor, Council, and Secretaries, it would not alter their policy a jot; but within a month you would find Lahāur occupied, and Gobindgurh ransacked."

"You certainly are free spoken Bellasis; don't you know that

I have many allies in Hindustan? did you never hear what Durjan Sâl offered me to help him at Bhartpur?"

"I am the well-wisher of the Khâlsa, heartily so, for I am not ungrateful for your Highness's favours; and, as I love the English banner, I would rather, for its own sake, see its lust of conquest restrained, and that the British Government should consolidate their already huge possessions than extend them. But can a Prince of your Highness's sagacity for a moment suppose that, Mahrâthâ, Gurkha, Jât, or Musalmân would desire your success, or even wish to change the English for the Sikh rule? It is not unknown to so discerning a Ruler that those who nearest approach to our own opinion, but still do not adopt it, are those who give most offence; thus Sûnis sell Shiahs, (c) and think they do God a service; Budhists cordially detest Hindus; and do not both faiths hate Sikhs? Whether as innovators and heretics, or as heathens, and as dripping with the blood of their brethren? And yet the Sikh has much in common with both Musalmân and Hindu; no, believe me, your Highness, the brother estranged is the bitterest foe; indeed have you not at your own court, ample specimens of the disunion among the Princes of India? have you not Holkar and Appa Sahib as your suppliants? And as for the usurper Durjan Sâl, it was easy for him to give away, or rather to offer, what was not his own; and his nephew's treasure would doubtless, in his opinion, have been well applied in putting down its owner; on the same terms you would find allies enough, every where; the discontented and the dispossessed would assure you of a large share of the property you might recover for them." "Ah, but when recovered we could help ourselves." "Yes, and doubtless, your friends would so think; and their first device would be how to get rid of, or at least to outwit you." "I like you Bellasis, for you do not flatter; you must stay at court for a while, and I'll not forget your interests." In such manner we often conversed, and I always found his Highness both reasonable and affable; I was of course present at the several public interviews given and received, but then I was only one of many, where every one was trying to elbow for himself a place, I had therefore little wish or opportunity to get beyond the threshold.

During our stay at Rupar, Lord Bentinck sent for me, and, by

permission of the Maharajah I waited on his Lordship ; whose Quaker like simplicity struck me exceedingly ; indeed, stripping him of his followers, and taking him aside as was his pleasure to go in the attire of an English farmer, no one could for a moment have accused him of being the greatest potentate on earth ; the man who had most freely under his controul the largest mass of God's creatures, and the largest portion of territory and of wealth, the kings of the earth being as pigmies to him, and the huge empire of Russia and China not even equalling his empire in real and substantial power : and yet this man appeared, and was in reality, the personification of simplicity, and, however erroneous his means, and vulgar the instruments and the machinery he used, he was, I do believe, a thoroughly honest man, as he was a fearless and uncompromising one.

He had then just weathered the half-batta storm ; a campaign more trying perhaps to British interests than any they had yet undertaken, and which nothing but the right feeling of the majority of the officers, and, perhaps, want of decided leaders, prevented ending in open and wide spread mutiny ; he was right in not yielding to the loudly expressed cries of the military ; but he was wrong in the manner in which he executed his invidious commission ; and more wrong still, in not separating himself from the unjust act by putting himself on half-batta too. But enough, and peace to his ashes ; he meant well, and may the odium rest on those who calmly and coldly, from across the ocean, sent out such orders, and again and again repeated them, as not one of themselves would have dared to enforce.

Lord Bentinck appeared to be but very partially acquainted with the position of affairs in Central-Asia and along the Border, where his thoughts were so anxiously turned ; with surprize I now gathered that no steps, or scarcely any, had been taken to procure authentic information ; here I learnt was a news-writer, believed to be corrupt ; there another, known to be so ; and in another quarter, a Subaltern officer would be sent, or rather allowed to wander unaccredited, at his own expence, and at his own risk ; or a commercial Agent or traveller hardly permitted to go where the British Government should have given lakhs to have induced intelligent and honest Agents to venture.

Moorcroft, himself I believe in their employ, though as a travel-

ler on his own bottom, gave such information as if acted on, would have prevented the encroachments of Gulāb Singh on Ladāk and the Chinese frontier; and it was only now that a mission from Bombay under Lieutenant Burnes, had tardily wound its way up the Rāvi under the guise of bringing English *Dray* horses for his Highness's especial riding; but in reality to spy out the land which could, under the same intelligent officer, have been better and more honestly done in a hundred other ways.

"You have travelled I believe Colonel Bellasis," remarked Lord Bentinck to me, "you have been in Persia and Affghānistān?"

"I have, my Lord, I served some years in the former country, and at Kābul and Kāndahār I spent several months."

"What is your opinion of the state of affairs in those quarters?"

"That all is at sixes and sevens in both; that any power that can pay may establish its influence there to-morrow; as to patriotism, or a care for any Chief or for any master, domestic or foreign, the feeling is dead; however as of the two, the Persians are least to be depended on and the easiest to assail, I would venture to suggest,—but I intrude."

"By no means, Colonel, I shall be obliged for your opinion, pray proceed."

"I was about to say, my Lord, that it seems to me that the best policy the masters of India can pursue will be to frighten the Persian, and foster the Affghān; the former are venal to a degree, they would take your last rupee, and then turn against you; besides you are too far off to effectually influence them, occupy Kharāk, shew them how easily you could make a descent on their coast; open a communication with some of the discontented and starving Princes in the South—touch the Persians on the tail my Lord, and they'll not make much head way; threaten Shirāz and they will not trouble Hirāt."

"This is quite a new view of the matter," observed his lordship, "pray continue."

"But, for the Affghans I recommend quite a different policy, they are a poor people; they want unanimity and common sense to guide their counsels; they want money, they want confidence in something or somebody; in Dost Mohamad they have, I am inclined to think,

as good a man as they are likely to get; he is not too honest for his times, or so straightforward as to fall by the crookedness of those around; he eagerly seeks your alliance and bows his neck to your yoke; send him a brigade, give him such a body-guard as will secure him at Kâbul, and enable him to go out in his districts, collect his rents, chastise his turbulent, and encourage his peaceful feudatories. But at present, though unquestionably the best of his nation, he dare scarcely leave the Bâla Hissâr, lest on his return he should find the gates closed. If a Ghilji or a Suddozie considered he could support himself for a day in the sovereignty, Dost Mohamad would be shot like a dog; but no one lusts for the bed of thorns, unless indeed the dotard Shah Shujah, or his more besotted brother the blind Zemân."

Lord Bentinck listened to me with much attention, and saying that he hoped to have an opportunity of renewing the conversation, wished me a very good morning.

I had not, however, the good fortune to enjoy another interview, which disappointed me much, as, from all I heard and saw, I had formed a high estimate of his Lordship's wisdom as well as benevolence; of his unostentatious simplicity what can I say? it has since been to me the wonder of many a solitary hour, and I have in vain sought for its parallel in ancient or modern history.

NOTES

(a) When "THE ADVENTURER" first appeared in the *Delhi Gazette*, a gentleman, who had served in the Kâbul campaign, made some observations, which seem to me worth inserting here, though the intervening time has so mightily altered the position of affairs. The opinion of an intelligent eye witness, formed at the time and on the spot, may help to the future solution of those causes which led to the reverses that the British arms sustained in Kabul.

"I only wish from my heart that our Government would remember the opinion Bellasis expresses as to the relative power of European and Native troops, and act upon the principle in Affghanistan. Two squadrons of Dragoons at Kandahar and two at Kabul—fellows that won't be refused—to serve as an edge and as an example to Shah Shujah's "Jan Baze." Four batteries of European artillery, and four good European regiments, fresh from Europe or the Colonies, without any Indian prejudices as to equipage and camp-followers, and prepared to rough it a little if necessary, would be amply sufficient for our military occupation in Affghanistan.

"Our Hindustani troops might then safely be withdrawn, and besides an enormous saving in extra batta being thus effected (sepoys draw sometimes four and five rupees extra per month, as compensation for rations, while Europeans have

only half a pound of beef daily), we should be saved that excessive *dislike and detestation* which the Afghans entertain towards us, in consequence of the bullying and swaggering propensities of our Indian sepoy; which feeling more than neutralizes the good effect of their acknowledged courage and heroism in the field. By the people of Afghanistan, the Natives of India, whether Hindu or Indo-Muselman, are thoroughly despised, and nothing but dread of their numbers and of their Nizam, prevents the Afghans from wreaking their vengeance on individuals of them. European soldiers, on the other hand, are respected; nay, even liked, and, so long as the "unclean animal" forms no part of their fare, Afghans have no objection, whatever, to eat with them, considering them, as "people of the Book," in every way entitled to that privilege: while their acknowledged reputation for personal courage and physical strength—their great superiority in the art and discipline of war—their higher standard of truth, justice and sincerity (which, low as it may sometimes be, far exceeds the most exalted principles to be met with among the Mohamedans of Afghanistan) and that mysterious moral influence which the meanest native of Britain possesses over the Asiatic mind, prepare the Afghans to acknowledge them as conquerors. With the above mentioned number of European troops as a reserve, we may safely venture, *gradually*, to increase and discipline the corps of Native Afghans under British officers, in the service of Shah Shujah; and by degrees, get rid of the hated Hindustanis. By a judicious enlistment of different tribes, Ghiljis, Duranis, Hazaras, Momunds, Pharsewans, Khyberes, &c. each being paid directly through British officers, all danger of insubordination may be avoided; while, by restricting the age of admission into the ranks to from fourteen to sixteen, (although by doing so, a longer time may be required to render the regiments efficient,) we shall get men accustomed to discipline. For the supply of officers to such a force, a corps of Cadets should be formed, from among the sons of the principal Chiefs, who will be found most willing to join it, and these should be carefully instructed under British officers, and declared well qualified, before being entrusted with commissions. In short, we must adopt with these Afghans, (who have no prejudices, other than our Hindustani followers may have taught them,) the same system of discipline which has been found to answer so admirably among similar brave and independent tribes in Europe, and not attempt to follow the "Bengal regulations" too implicitly. But this is not all—*while British officers are employed with Shah Shujah's troops*, a corresponding protection must be afforded to the interests of the *raiyats*, in order that our name may not be mixed up with acts of injustice and oppression. For this purpose, the revenue settlement of each district, Talook, or village, as arranged and agreed on by the Afghans themselves, should be registered, and every payment duly recorded by British superintendents, appointed for the purpose who will be able to check any unjust demands.

This, in fact, is the system adopted by Sir C. T. Metcalfe, with such good effect, during his administration of Hyderabad." J.

(b) Banaras is the Kasi of the Hindus.

(c) Nor are the respective parties always very careful to ascertain the distinctions: Sûnis are often seized, and, to shew their creed, curse All and all his adherents; and thus frequently they increase their own sufferings, being tortured for attempting to deceive the faithful, until they acknowledge the imposition, when they have the satisfaction of being sold as genuine *Shiâhs*.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

CONTENTS.

Bellasis feels that his head is still in the lion's jaws.—Some hint for the people called Christians.

"My Sovereign, I confess, your royal graces
Showered on me daily, have been more than could
My studied purposes requite, which went
Beyond all man's endeavours—my endeavours
Have ever come too short for my desires,
Yet filled with my abilities. Mine own ends
Have been mine so, that evermore they pointed
To the good of your most sacred person, and
The profit of the state. For your great graces,
Heaped upon me, poor undeserver, I
Can nothing render but allegiant thanks;
My prayers to heaven for you; my loyalty,
Which ever has, and ever shall be growing,
Till death, that winter, kill it."

Henry VIII.

—"The full sum of me,
Is, an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old,
But she may learn; and, happier than this,
She is not bred so dull, but she can learn.
Happiest of all, in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As by her Lord, her Governor, her King!"

Merchant of Venice.

Though I was evidently in high favor, and believed to have faithfully executed my trust at Kangrâ, it was beyond the Maharajah's comprehension that I could have served him without also helping myself: when therefore some of the hangers-on of the *darbâr* suggested that I should be squeezed, and declared that I had well feathered my nest, and ought to be made to disgorge a lăkh or more, Ranjit could not resist the bait. Either affecting however, or really intending to let me off easily, he ordered a full

acquittance to be given of my Kāngrā accounts, on my paying down thirteen thousand rupees. I spurned the imputation indignantly, and said that I had already accounted, to the last *cowrie*, for the money that had passed through my hands, and that I had neither intention nor ability to pay another rupee.

My message, with due exaggeration, was reported to the king, and he thereupon reduced the demand one-half; I sent back the same reply; he became angry, and ordered my *dera* to be plundered. Expecting some such result, I had drawn together a strong band of followers and well-wishers, and determined to defend my right: the determination was perhaps a rash one, but it had the desired effect. The Bhyah entrusted with the commission had orders not to use violence, or excite commotion so near to the English camp, but to do every thing short of coming to blows. Bhup Chand was a sensible sort of fellow, and soon saw his errand was a fruitless one; he was, however, not ill-disposed, and dallied long enough to enable my friend the *fagir* first to persuade the Maharajah that I had yielded, and when he was pacified, to obtain my pardon and have me excused from payment. Such prevarication came quite within Aziz-ud-din's system of ethics, and probably Ranjit was glad on reflection, to have a pretext for avoiding a breach of the peace.

For a day, I was much enraged, and kept my tent; but, feeling that the full receipt I had obtained secured me from further annoyance, and determining never again to interfere in matters of finance, I allowed myself to be persuaded that the proposed violence was only a part and parcel of the Panjāb system, and by no means reflected on my personal character. It was sulkily enough, however, that I obeyed the next summons to *darbār*, where I was received with extraordinary favour: no notice being taken of my late recusancy, I was insensibly led from my own dark thoughts to fall in with the jovial humour of the ruler; whatever was the cause, whether he had that day been gratified by any unusual civilities from the British side, I never saw him so facetious or so loquacious.

He drew me on to talk of military matters, "fought his battles o'er again," made me minutely describe my brief campaign in the hills, and observed, "Ah Bellasis, there you certainly caught the *Paharis* in a trap, and served them in their own coin! But, it was a venturous game to play: your force was small, and had

they been commonly prudent—had one deserter from you joined them, you would not be here to-day to boast of the royal favour.”

“ True, your Highness ; but I had taken all precautions, and without some hazard, no scheme can ever be achieved.”

“ You are young, Bellasis, and youth is rash. No prudent Commander ever risks so much as that, failing his immediate object, he cannot bring off his troops. You might have been cut off, and your loss might have lost Kāngrā to the state. Prudence, however, is more easily acquired than pluck. I don't exactly blame, but rather caution you, for I wish you well, and propose your promotion.”

In my heart I was seeking little but a fair pretext to ask for my dismissal, and this, within the last twenty-four hours, had been afforded. The Maharajah, by his winning tones and kindly speeches, seemed aware of my thoughts, and as my temper was not one to bear malice, his honeyed words had the effect that sweets from a ruler's lips usually have on his servants. Answering, therefore, with respect, if not with humility, I only slightly hinted at cause of offence, and declared myself as ever a faithful servant of the Khalsa.

“ We know it, Colonel *Sahib* ; the appearance of every thing at Kāngrā bespeaks your activity and your honesty, and we shall take care that you go not unrewarded.”

Many of those present at this interview bit their lips at finding I had rather gained than lost ground from the late fracas ; once or more an attempt was made to twist my words against myself ; among those most opposed to me was my old enemy, Tej Singh, but the Maharajah, seeming to have got up the scene for the purpose of soothing me, and shewing that I was in favour, arbitrarily prevented all hostile interference ; and calling me his well approved friend, made me a present of a handsome horse, and, seeing that the desired effect had been produced, dismissed the *darbar*.

Aziz-ud-din, who now looked on me as a special protégée of his own, took an early opportunity of congratulating me on my good fortune. The old man's friendship for me was never tested by any very urgent demand, and I am glad of it, lest my feelings for him should have been changed. Having shewn me very great kindness, he seemed really attached to me, and, if a moslem can really love a Christian, to take pleasure in my society and devise my welfare.

The *fagir* had been so long used to dissemble that it was difficult to know, nor did he always himself seem to be sure when he was in earnest; surrounded by sectarians, himself the minister of a bitter enemy to his own faith, and keenly watched by a hundred eyes, he had weathered the storms of a quarter of a century, and was now unquestionably the most trusted, as he was the most trustworthy servant of the State.

He had been so much accustomed to hear and to take a share in the mummery of Khālsa superiority and Sikh excellence, that he now half believed they were realities; and himself a moral man, he hardly looked with disgust on the filthiness of his master's character.

One day, the old man being more than usually loquacious, asked me about his old friends and acquaintances; "the *Sāhib* knows every thing, he reads the English Akhbārs, and they seem to know what all the world are about; I was thinking Colonel *Sāhib*, while on my *charpāi* last night, what you told me yesterday of the stars being worlds, and probably full of living beings; and it brought to my mind the littleness and the nothingness of this narrow circle of ours; it reminded me of a story an old *biragi* once told me, of a country whose king was selected tri-annually; but the terms of Government were, that, on the completion of each monarch's period, he was to be banished to a neighbouring island; the candidates were always many, the successful one ate, drank, and made merry, and when his time was up, submitted to his fate. But after a time, one was elected, who made it the study of his three years reign to prepare for his after banishment; instead of building palaces in his kingdom, he sent his family and his treasures to the island, and there prepared his gardens and dwelling houses, so that when the period of his translation arrived, all was prepared, and he moved into a more comfortable berth than the one he had quitted; Ah, *Sāhib*, I had not sense when the *biragi* told me this, to understand the allegory, but now I see that the riches of the world do not make a man happier in life, nor smooth his last moments, nor avail him hereafter, but that mercy and truth, justice and honesty, are the treasures the old man bade me lay up in my coffer."

"Yes *fagiri*, they are the stores that moth and rust do not corrupt, and against which thieves do not break through and steal."

"The *Sāhib* speaks wisely."

"I speak the words of our holy book, and I wish I could more abide by its precepts my friend."

"Has the *Sahib* an *Anjil*? I never saw one, nor ever before heard a gentleman talk of one; I thought they were only meant for the preachers at Ludianah, who, I hear, have endeavoured, under pretence of teaching English, to introduce Christianity."

"The *Anjil* is the book of life, the word of truth, *faqirji*, and Christians are bound, if they believe the tenets of their own religion, to propagate it; but doubtless there is a time and a season for all things, and I am far from thinking it right, under a false garb, even to do good, and am decidedly of opinion that English literature and the Christian religion should not be coupled; as to the Ludiana Padris, there is neither deceit nor force used by them; they declare that they left their own land to try and convert you, and no one who does not choose need listen to them; not but that I consider we should be conferring the greatest of blessings on you all if we could make you Christians."

"What! make us hog-eaters, drunkards, riotous livers, and debauchees! for, saying your presence Colonel *Sahib*, are not all these concomitants of Christianity?"

"No more than gross beastliness is of the tenets of Nanak, or than crimes that I could mention are enjoined by the prophet; on the contrary, as I have said, our religion commands peace, love, purity, and universal charity; he who best acts up to such principles comes nearest to his profession; he who acts contrary to them is but a Christian in name, a heathen at heart; our Missionaries are not always the wisest and most judicious of men, but they are generally simple, earnest, and right-minded; look into the conduct of any of them, and if you can see the vices that pervade the conduct of Hindu, Sikh and Musalmán recluses, then will I allow that we are in error."

"Forgive me *Sahib*, I speak less of what I know than of what I have heard; I know that Christians are wise and brave, and I have even seen them gentle and kind; but, performing no ceremonies, having no temples, and saying no prayers; I hardly knew they had a religion. Ah! it is a great many years ago since Metcalfe *Sahib* was at Amritsir, but I remember it as if yesterday: he had with him three or four other *Sahibs*, they were all good men like him-

self, and their memories have remained, but it is of Fergusson *Sahib* (a) I would speak; he was wounded by the Akális in the night attack on the English camp (b):—the Maharajah was much vexed, and sent me next day to enquire after the health of the wounded gentleman, whom I expected to see covered with blood and writhing in agony; but lo! as I entered his tent, I saw only a gentleman lying in a bed, propped up by pillows, and reading a book. The sheets were snow-white, not a drop of blood was visible, and so placid and at ease was the *Sahib*, that I fancied I must have made a mistake, until I spoke, and Captain Fergusson put down his book, and told me that he was very happy, that he was reading his good book and felt no pain; I have often thought of him, *Sahib*, he must have been a good gentleman; and so clean and spotless were his sheets, just as must have been his heart, *wah! wah!* he was a good *Sahib*."

"Yes, my friend," I replied, "there are good and bad among us, as among yourselves, "the *jama* does not always cover a *faqir*" says Shekh Sádi."

"True *Sahib*, and if all Christians were like Fergusson *Sahib* and yourself, we could better understand you, and more rightly appreciate the good that is undoubtedly in your characters, for whoever doubted the word of a *Sahib* (c)? and where there is truth, there is the foundation of right."

We would then talk on more private and personal matters, and I could see that the interest the old man took in me was not affected, but that I had decidedly touched a chord in his heart.

"What would you wish, *Sahib*? would you like Káshmir, Multan or Pashawar? In the Maharajah's present mood they are all within your reach, and I need not say that my word is at your service,—but do not, I pray you, believe yourself safe from the machinations of the Rajah and his partizans; for a time, and for their own reasons, they appear to have left you unmolested, and even in regard to the lady to have acted generously, but they have a reason, rely on it, and trust them not."

"Thank you, my kind friend," I replied, "I appreciate the Rajah's favours at their true value, and as for myself and prospects I have little thought and less care; I have suffered much during my short service, and, but for one tie to the country, I should at once beg for my discharge; whether I go here or there, therefore,

or whether I remain in the presence, is to me indifferent; if I could be assured of doing good in any quarter, to that would I turn; but Kashmir has been so long mismanaged and ground down; Pashawar is so lawless, and Multan is so hot, that the Government of any would be sad up-hill work. Besides, I confess to you that I see a coming storm, from which it behoves all wise men to keep aloof; and during my short career I have witnessed so much of the unruliness of the Sikh soldiery, that I shall be unwilling to put myself unnecessarily into their power."

"The Khalsa soldiers! what of them, *Sahib*?"

"What, *fagir Sahib*, but that they are a band of ruffians? was not Nand Singh an officer of these heroes? and was not his brother Bhup Singh in their ranks? and indeed, seeing that his Highness, instead of hanging or blowing away robbers and other miscreants, fills up his ranks with them, what other fruit can he expect than is daily reaped; misconduct before the enemy, oppression in the provinces, and insubordination towards their officers?"

"What would *you* do?" "Hang up a score." "Is the *Sahib* of Avitabl's school, does he delight in blood?"

"No, *fagir Sahib*, I do not; and that is the very reason I would shed a little; I would not imprison nor place in irons, my officers or other men holding respectable situations; but I would, on the contrary, make the soldier's post one of respectability, the officer's one of honour, and I would pay him and treat him as one placed far above his *sipahis*; indeed unless you do so, it is impossible to expect that they will respect or obey him. Nor is it in human nature that the man who was in irons to-day, should either respect himself or be respected to-morrow; if in short, I ever again command a body of the Maharajah's troops, I must have full authority over them."

"You were not much interfered with at Kangra?"

"Not much indeed, except that my life was in hourly peril, and that nothing but Providence saved me from both my own men and Government."

"Come, come, *Sahib*; the Maharajah was ever kind."

"So he was, and, I should rather say, from my enemies high and low."

While the two courts remained encamped opposite each other, I made acquaintance with more than one of the English officers,

and had many interesting conversations with one of them who had been long stationed at Ludiana, and who seemed well acquainted with the politics of both powers, and with the under current that guided the counsels of the Calcutta and Lahaur Cabinets.

I will venture on another dose of history for the reader, by giving some of the particulars gathered in these conversations.

Not long before the Rupar interview, Captain Murray, the British Political Assistant at Ambalah, had died; he was an excellent public officer, and a conscientious, though reserved and somewhat eccentric man. Having been many years at Amballah, and being intimately acquainted with the histories of all the Sikh families on either bank of the Suteluj, he saw with regret the curse brought on so extensive a country by the Lahaur supremacy, and strove with all his might to keep it within bounds, by opposing Ranjit's constant claims, as affected paramount, to new patches of territory on the left bank of the river. But in this laudable design, Captain Murray was much thwarted by the Agent at Ludiana, who stood up for the Lahaur claims, and as the battle was fought in Calcutta, the latter prevailed. Each year saw Ranjit obtain a village or an *ilaka* until, with little exception, both banks of the Suteluj were acquired by the wily old Maharajah, who petted his Ludiana friend and made much of the man who so well served his interests; at the Rupar meeting the Agent was treated with every honor, and called by the Maharajah his son. From what I saw of Ranjit, however, I am not of opinion that he really liked, or was most influenced by those whom he was most familiar with: on the contrary, I believe that opposition was what he respected, and that he only appreciated what he dearly, or at some price, acquired, and that if he flattered Murray least, he esteemed him most.

It was in the year 1805 that Holkar, taking refuge beyond the Sutluj, was pursued by the victorious General Lake even to the Byas, when the Mahratah, finding he could get no help from the Sikh, succumbed. This seems to have been the first time the British and Lahaur Governments came in contact; and, so little was the former acquainted with the state of things beyond the Sutluj that Lord Wellesley's letters to General Lake then alluded to Ranjit Singh as to one, (though perhaps the most powerful,) of many; and in such general terms as shew that it was only the sudden

flight of Holkar in that direction which reminded the British that such a people as the Sikhs existed. The Maharajah was, however, better informed than his more civilized neighbours, and it was only just to try the length of his tether, and as a dying effort to extend his influence to the South of the Sutluj, that he made his brief campaign, while Mr. Metcalfe was in the Panjab.

The reader may remember that in September, 1808, the Sirhind and Malwa Sikhs earnestly petitioned for British protection, and that Mr. Metcalfe was sent to discuss the arrangements with Ranjit. While both parties were encamped at Kussoor, the Maharajah suddenly broke up his camp, and taking the British envoy some marches with him, swept by Farrid-kote and Mulair-kotla, to Ambala, and, in spite of Mr. Metcalfe's remonstrances, gave away or appropriated the territory then acquired. Nor was it until Sir David Ochterlony, at the head of a considerable force, (backed by a reserve under General St. Leger,) reached Ludiana, that the conqueror would yield up his late acquisitions, and consent to treat on the basis of a mutual recognition of the status existing when the conference commenced at Kussoor. Eventually Ranjit was obliged, very reluctantly, to give up the fruits of his last campaign, and tacitly to admit to the Patiala and other Sirhind and Malwa Sikhs, how much he dreaded the British arms. This was a solitary struggle, a single bold attempt to conquer or to conciliate the southern Sikhs, for, in his endeavours to detach them from their proposed league with the English, he granted them large portions of his late acquisitions, especially to his maternal uncle, Bhag Singh of Jheend, who thus acquired both Ludiana and Ambala, and afterwards much embarrassed the arrangements of the British.

It had been the mutual feuds of the Chiefs that first tempted Ranjit across the Sutluj, and he was very sore at finding so fair a field and so easy a conquest plucked, as it were, from his grasp, and until he saw Ochterlony's Battalions, he persisted in calling the Jamna his natural boundary.

The whole southern bank of the Sutluj had been for generations in the hands of *Pathan* and other Mussalman Chiefs, servants or feudatories of the Delhi throne. Of these the most considerable at the time of Ranjit's rise, (and, indeed, with Mul-lair-Kotla, almost the only one that survived the break-up of Mussalman supremacy in that quarter) was *Rae Aleas* of *Rae-ke-kote*.

He too was sinking fast, one by one his possessions crumbled away till little has remained to his family but his fort and the lands it commanded. Doubtless, but for the British interference, all up to the Jamna would have swelled the Lahaur *raj*; but, in consequence of their interference, the territory as then found has, (with the few changes caused by lapsed feifs, resumptions, &c.) remained in "statu quo." Nearly one-half of that portion of the territory in question, protected by the British, belongs to Karam Singh of Patiala, whose revenue of twenty takhs exceeds all the others put together: Jhind is next in importance, then Khytal, and then Naba. These are the four larger powers, protected by the English; among them they enjoy a revenue of thirty-five lakhs, and could bring into the field twenty thousand men of sorts. There are besides perhaps as many as a hundred petty chiefs and ten times that number of Lordlings whose total revenue may be ten lakhs, and who could furnish twelve thousand soldiers; but from what I could hear, though they are well disposed to the British, and stout-looking fellows into the bargain, they would not be efficient allies in the field; accustomed to nothing beyond a boundary dispute, they would come into action as mere Militia men, and would not make a stand against the regular troops of the Panjāb or any other State. The Cavalry especially, except a few personal retainers of the Chiefs, are very inferior to those of Lahaur.

The Lahaur possessions on the left bank of the Sutluj were, (in the 9th Chapter of these adventures) esteemed at *twelve lakhs* of rupees; not above four lakhs, however, reach the treasury; and the territory like the British portion, is mostly in *jagir* to military or religious Chiefs: the former descendants of those who helped Ranjit Singh and his ancestors in the consolidation of the Sikh power; the latter claiming kindred with the early spiritual leaders. These possessions are scattered in patches from the Sutluj to the Jamna, but lie chiefly along the bank of the former. The inhabitants of these trans-Sutluj States, whether under the Lahaur or British Government, comprise as few Sikhs as those of the Panjāb, and chiefly consist of mixed tribes, as Gujars, Jats, Rains, Dogars, &c. In all the States a large portion of the cultivators are Musalmāns, and you may go into village after village belonging to the Sikhs, without meeting a Singh.

The officer who kindly furnished me with the above heads of

information, took me round the lines of the English, and I was much struck with the completeness of every thing in their camp equipage : long accustomed to the make-shifts of Persian and Sikh armies, I was quite delighted with the contrast. The two squadrons of Lancers especially struck me ; each man looked fit for an officer ; and I was also much pleased with the dashing style of the Horse Artillery. In the several days that the troops were out, I did not observe a single accident occur, or any part of the harness give way, although every move was done at a gallop, and the coming about to bring the guns into action was always at a fearful rate ; indeed I was prepared to see one gun crush the other, but the movements of the horses soon shewed me that they too knew the sound of the bugle, and that little was required in the men but to hold hard. The practice, too, was excellent, I never saw better in any part of the world ; and though we had been trying to get up a return play of our own, the Maharajah was wise enough to give up the rivalry, seeing that however we might succeed, we should shew small after the English display.

As I have said, Ranjit was most anxious about the appearance of the Sikhs in this, his first interview with the Governor-General : he had desired my presence, but he himself gave all the orders at the time, and selected the troops that were to shew off. Besides the regulars, (attired like the English except their head and foot gear) there was the elite of the Sikh army ; thousands, clothed in yellow and green silk vests, with a loose *déagagée* turban, half flowing over the shoulder ; to an unpractised eye these men, with their long dark beards and fierce aspect, looked more warlike than the quiet and subdued *sipahis*, and the statue-like European soldiery ; but no soldier could for a moment compare the silken array with the broad-cloth, or the gold and tinsel of the Sikhs, with the simple solidity of the British, and doubt the result of an encounter. The quiet, proud bearing of the Company's *sipahis*, quite as much as that of the Europeans, seemed to assert their superiority, as the Maharajah and his train rode slowly down their line and inspected them, as they afterwards did us. Once or twice, in spite of Ranjit's good arrangements, a fracas nearly took place, from inquisitive idlers prowling into the English ranks, pulling about the men's weapons and handling their accoutrements. Such conduct was generally taken good humouredly, but occasionally a churl and hot-blood

met, and then a hand would be raised, or a blade half-drawn, but all ended peaceably ; and, if Lord William Bentinck was as well pleased with the result of the interview, as was the Lahaur Chief, one point was gained, that of putting the parties in good humour with another.

A bridge was prepared a little above the town of Rupar ; the English camp was on their own bank and very picturesque it looked, lying among the trees and cultivation that fill up the alluvial bed between the stream and the high ridge that bounds the *khadir* : the Sikh encampment, on the other side, occupied a small sandy plain that lies between the river and the barren range of hills that form the lower steps of the first Himalayan range.

After all formalities had been arranged between the two powers, the Maharajah paid the first visit, which the Governor-General returned next day. After this there were mutual inspections of the troops, and other such Military spectacles, till the camp broke up ; the Maharajah determined on making a progress towards the north, and I obtained a month's leave to visit Lahaur, and shew the capital to my bride.

Mahtab Kowr being a hill-woman, was, as I have already said, less fettered by custom and form than the people of the plains, and could more readily adapt herself to new customs. Affection, too, wonderfully quickens a woman's powers ; and her anxiety to be in all respects my companion, gave my wife an aptitude to learn that astonished me. Coming thus anonymously before the world, I may be excused for dwelling a little on her who was, while I had her,

"The dove of peace to my lone Ark,

"The only star that made the stranger's sky less dark."

and now, when on the eve of quitting this land, I record the remembrances furnished by my sojourn in it. I can hardly believe that she is not by, to read, to comment, to suggest, as was her wont.

I see thine eye still beaming !

I hear thy voice's tone !

It haunts me in my dreaming,

It visits me alone.

Oh ! couldst thou be departed.

While thus thy form I see ?

Can I be broken-hearted

While thou art thus with me ?

It is but a delusion—
 I know thou dost not live!
 Yet love I the illusion,
 Beyond what truth could give—
 Loved as thou wast while nearer,
 My bosom now is taught,
 Thou canst be even dearer
 Enshrined in holy thought!

NOTES

(a) These observations were actually addressed to me by *fagir* Aziz-U-din, and are preserved to shew the force of one good example above a "hundred homilies." The individual referred to in the text, is thus mentioned by Sir Walter Scott, in a letter to Lord Montague, written in 1820:—

"Sir Adam is well, and his circle augmented by his Indian brother, Major Fergusson, who has much of the family manner, an excellent importation, of course, to Tweedside."—(See Lockhart's life of Scott.)

This was the officer who commanded Sir C. T. Metcalfe's escort when at Lahaur.

(b) This attack was intended as a surprise, but the enemy were deceived as to British discipline. The small party under Captain Fergusson (who, if report errs not, fought in his *panjammah* when he received the wound referred to by the *fagir*) quickly formed, and scattered the assailants. Ranjit Singh was greatly enraged with the Akalis for this wanton attack on the camp of a friendly guest, and heaped on the fanatics every term of abuse; but he chiefly upbraided them for cowardice, *after having attacked* the camp, to allow so small a party, about four hundred, to repulse so many thousands of them!

(c) This confidence in the truth and integrity of British officers has been spread, even further than their power. The Bengal Artillery officer who, lately went from Herat to Petersburg, found the feeling already existing at Khiva. It may not be amiss to suggest the importance of not weakening this most valuable ally, by incautiously disseminating every rumour that may reach a camp or station. The credit of the officers of the British mission at Herat, received a severe shock in consequence of their having stated, on what they believed unquestionable authority, that five hundred men had been killed in the battle of Bamian, when the Heratis afterwards ascertained that the number killed did not amount to *one-tenth* of that stated.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

CONTENTS.

"Montrechs seldom sue in vain."—*Bellasis gets a roving commission.*—"One-half of the world know not how the other half live."—*The Bhoaria's tale.*

"The towers of Ferozpūr look down,
On many a mile of subject land;
On cultured field and peopled town,
And on the Ghūr's silver sand.
The peasant tills a thankful soil,
And safely reaps the field he sowed;
Nor dreads to lose his early toil,
Nor fears the armed Sikh's inroad.
It was not so in former days,
For, many a mouldering tower around
Attests the ruthless border frays
That made each field a battle-ground."

M. S.

Both camps had broken up; and on the morning of the 2nd of November, the two banks of the Sutlej, late teeming with life, and sparkling with the pride and pomp of the Maharajah's court, and the prouder, if less gaudy, array of the English Vicegerent, were silent and forsaken: the beautiful scenery of Rupar was again left to repose, or to witness the debaucheries of its savage lord, the Sikh Rajah, Bhup Singh, one of the many lordlings of the day who are a curse to the land they devour.

The night before the dispersion of the camps, the Maharajah sent to me at a late hour; I was surprised, for although I knew that he often transacted business with the Rajah or *fakir* at such untimely hours, it had not hitherto been my lot to be so disturbed; however I immediately went, and found his Highness in his sleeping tent, half reclining against a large bolster on a *charpai*, Aziz-u-din sitting on the ground by his side, and two attendants in the distance.

"Ah Bellasis!" was the greeting, as I was ushered in by the waiting Bhaya, "you have been quick, my friend, your Pesh-khema has gone off; how is that?"

"The camp was broken up I understood, your Highness, and that I had a month's leave of absence."

"Yes, but why such haste? which way do you propose to travel?"

"By Kapurtalla to Lahaur, your Highness."

"Ah, so I thought; but I have an errand for you elsewhere, my friend; here, sit by the *faqir*, he'll tell you."

I was in no very good humour at being disturbed from my bed, and in still worse at what seemed the cancelling of my leave; but when Monarchs tell their servants to sit in their presence, they are seldom disobeyed; I accordingly sat myself down beside Aziz-u-din, who quickly perceiving the cloud on my brow, commenced muttering a string of ejaculations, and pithy sentences, as much with a view of giving himself time to put his speech into a pleasing and complimentary form, as to let me recover my temper: meantime Ranjit Singh closed his one eye and slept, or affected to sleep; and the two attendants remained outside the tent.

"Ah *Sāhib*," at last opened out the *faqir*, "your *ikbal* is great; the light of the sun each day more brightly shines on you; and my friend, as a scholar and a sage, knows that happy is the man on whom the royal favour is turned; and withered the wretch from whom it is averted."

Here I began to look very impatient, but catching the *faqir's* eye which twinkled as much as to say, "all this is a part of my business, be patient," I waited, while he went on, "But the *Sahib* is wise, and knows the truth of all this; his servant will, therefore, explain that it is the Maharajah's orders that Colonel Bellasis should travel to Lahaur by way of Ludiana, Wudni and Ferozpūr; it is many years since his Highness has visited the South bank of the Sutluj, he is therefore desirous of sending a trusty servant who can observe and will faithfully report the state of affairs. You are desired to keep a journal and to note every occurrence, and above all to mark the state of the different forts belonging to the lieges, whether they are in a defensive condition, and especially whether any have been added to, or are now in progress of addition, in which

latter case you are positively to forbid the measure, and to bring the owner to the presence."

I was thunderstruck ; the order in itself was no very vexatious one, and to many would have been a boon ; but I did not like the kind of duty, and had made my arrangements for a month's holiday, so I looked black ; the *faqir* observing my countenance, glanced at me expressively, and remarked, " I thought it would be so, *Sahib*, that you would not have words to express your gratitude ; the Maharajah is reposing, we may retire ; if you will leave the tent, I will follow as soon as I can collect my papers." I rose, and walked off, and was not well out of the tent when I heard Ranjit turn round and chuckle something to the Secretary who shortly followed me : I did not conceal from him my annoyance, but the old man taking me by the arm replied, " be patient, *Sahib*, it is all for your good ; the duty is a pleasant, and may be a very profitable one, and will keep the royal eye on you."

" It is a work, however, that I do not mean to undertake," I replied moodily.

* The *faqir* was aghast, " The *Sahib* is not mad ? he does not drink, or I should suppose him intoxicated."

I laughed and replied, " Truly *Hakimji*, you try my patience ; here have I made all my arrangements for one route, and you send me by another double as long : how am I to take my wife ? and shall I not be considered a spy by the English ?"

" Why, *Sahib*, I have arranged for the lady, and have detained your boats, which can take her comfortably to Firozpur ; and for yourself, did you not tell me you had an invitation to Ludiana ?"

" Thanks for the boats, my good friend, and you are right as to my invitation to Ludiana, but how is that to frank me to Wudni, and into the old castle at Firozpur ? why, *faqir Sahib*, the two old women will use spells against me, and *jādū kūr* me, unless indeed Captain Wade has me seized as a spy."

" The *Sahib* is not afraid," and the old man looked queerly at me.

" No *faqirji* I am not ; but it is one thing to be a spy, another to be a soldier ; I am willing to take my chance of being shot, but I have no desire to be hanged."

" You *Sahib log* are a strange race, there is not a *Sardār* from Atar Singh, or Lena Singh Majetia, downwards, that would

not jump at your mission ; and here you object as if you were offered an injury."

" Offer it then to them, I have no fancy for prying into other men's halls."

Aziz-u-din understood his work : like a skilful angler he gave me leave to exhaust my pettishness, and then, when I paused, gently drew towards me, half reasoning, half flattering. I saw his game, and felt more than once inclined to turn restive upon him, but in the end he talked me over, so that I consented to let Mah-tâb go by water to Firozpûr under a suitable escort, and agreed to make a rapid stretch round my destined course, so as to meet her in time at the rendezvous. The *faqir* had *parwanahs* ready for me desiring all *Sardars*, *Jagirdars*, *Thanadars* and others exercising authority, or enjoying the Lahaur protection, to obey all orders given by the excellent Colonel Bellasis ; to throw open their castles and towers to him, to provide him with suitable escort, and all else that he may demand.

Before noon, the next day, I had embarked my wife, and mounting a good stout roadster ; within the hour I had reached the ancient town of Chamkour, famed for its defence in the olden times against the Delhi throne ; here I took a glance at the ancient *kila*, moralized after the usual fashion of travellers ; and changing my hack, for my good steed Chânda, rode him at a rattling rate to Machi-wala, likewise an old place, and one still thriving ; here I had another fresh horse, and before the sun was well down, was at the hospitable board of my friend ——— at Ludiâna, who, to enable him to entertain me, had got permission to go in advance of his regiment, and himself accompanied me in my pleasant ride ; it was almost all in the *kadar* of the Sutluj, and in the rainy season would have been a wet scamper, but now our ride was over a green and pleasantly varied country, the path being sometimes above, sometimes below the high bank of the river.

At Ludiâna I stayed but one day, and therefore was unable to examine it as minutely as I wished ; I had time, however, to perceive that the fort does no credit to its architect ; and that the new town has a forced and mushroom aspect ; hundreds, if not thousands, of shops being empty, and many with fair and smooth fronts being roofless ; the roads are bad and dirty ; a moiety of the inhabitants are Kâshmerians, a filthy, noisy, idle and litigious race :

one *bazar* is fine and broad, the others are narrow and poor, much as in other Native towns, except that they are more straight and regular.

Early the second morning I shook my kind host by the hand; and turning south-west, cantered across country to Jagraon, a large and neat town of considerable trade, and in the middle of a rich tract of country, belonging to Fattah Singh Aluwala: this Chief, not long before, had been discontented and even in rebellion; on which account Ranjit Singh was now jealous of his movements, and desired especially that I should thoroughly observe and report on what was the condition and spirit of his extensive estates south of the Satluj, giving him as they did such opportunity of intrigue. I found Jagraon a very neat and thriving place; well walled against a Cavalry inroad; with a citadel, admirably suited to the times for which it was built, and, even now, imposing; here I halted two days to allow my horses and servants to come up, and to make such enquiries as I should deem requisite; I was treated with every respect and attention by the authorities, and during my stay picked up a good deal of information; I was astonished at the extent and value of the Aluwala territory in this quarter, spreading like a net from the Mamdot border to the Jamna, and commanding the several roads into Hindostan.

I then made a morning's ride to Wadni, and found there a rather extensive fort, built of burnt brick, in good order; it was interesting to me from the sad and varied fortune of its nominal owner, Sada Konwar, Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law and the maker of his fortunes, who then was, and had long been, a prisoner. From Wadni I nearly retraced my steps, turning North, and giving Jagraon a wide berth to my right, I rode across the open plain to Dharamkot, a royal demesne, with a small half-mud, half-brick fort of no strength, but with a considerable, though dishevelled town attached. Here again I halted a day, and, to the horror of the grain-dealers, witnessed the opening of two grain pits; these deposits are made in seasons of plenty, the pits being dug in any high dry spot, filled, and covered over, and sometimes left untouched for years; when opened the local authorities get a fourth, and the owner generally sells the remainder at such enhanced price as amply repays him for the original outlay with interest and expenses; these deposits are the great resource of the country against famine, and but

for the arbitrary and heavy exactions above noted, (which eventually fall on the consumer) would be more numerous, and do much to relieve the plague of hunger which periodically depopulates the border, as it does many parts of Hindustân. The owners and authorities in this instance were not a little astonished, that, bearing a royal order for free quarters, I neither asked for anything, nor seemed to expect *soorsat*, or fee of any kind; the first fright therefore of those interested being over, I was overwhelmed with politeness.

Two hours before day-light the second day, I started with the moon; at seven miles on my right was Isa-Khân-ke-kot, a small walled town, of very bad fame, belonging to the Alûwâla Chief; by the light of the moon I rode through, and with some difficulty across the town; for, its limits being contracted, it is more than usually crowded; I then dismounted, and climbed the rampart, which is only a wall of five feet thickness, with a breastwork on it of scarce a foot, and may be taken as an average of the defences of walled towns on the border; the entrance gateway is large and imposing, and has rooms offering some accommodation above, from the roof of which must be an extensive view; enabling the marauders (who receive shelter within the walls, and harass the neighbourhood by their predatory incursions) to see the coming traveller, and to make their arrangements for meeting him. Half an hour of day-light remained, when I was again in my saddle, and cantering along with a single orderly. At about a *kos* from Isa-Khân-ke-kot I saw some persons lying almost naked on the bare ground, in four groups, each of two or three persons; and, beside each, some glittering substances, like small fish; the noise of our horses' hoofs roused one of the sleepers, but he did not speak: I hailed him as to who or what he was:

"Bohuryas, my Lord."

"What are you doing here?"

"Hunting, please your Excellency, here is our *shikar*."

"*Shikar*, what *shikar*? and what are those shining things by your side?"

"Our *shikar*, *Sahib*, they are *Sandas*," and at my bidding he brought me two large disgusting looking creatures, in shape and features like lizards,(a) but as large as rats, several hundred of which were lying by the men, each of whom, except the speaker, had his

wife and children with him. The *Sandas* are, I believe, the same reptile that in South America and in the Dakhan is pretty freely eaten; and is known to Englishmen as the Guana; my curiosity was excited at the heaps that lay around, so I asked the *Sawar* who was with me, "Do you eat them? and do others?"

"They do, but Hindus and Mahomedans do not," replied my orderly.

"They'll be bad before they can be eaten," I observed.

The Bohurya grinned, "They are not dead, *Sahib*," and he gave one a nudge to make it stir; the poor reptiles must, therefore, have been half killed, and left to linger to preserve them untainted till required. I was reflecting on the cruelty of man, and looking in wonder on the whole scene before me, and thinking on the wretched lot of the hunters, and of the mothers and children lying almost without clothing on the bare ground beside the men. The Bohuryah, however, who had been addressing me appeared to have no companions; he had his whole heap of living matter to himself. The day was just dawning, and while I was thus cogitating, I saw the Bohurya questioning my attendant, and heard him repeat "Bellasis." I threw him a rupee and cantered on, but had not gone a hundred yards until we were stopped by the loud cries of the Bohurya who came rushing breathlessly up as we slackened our pace, "Will the *Sahib* forgive his slave?"

"Forgive what? don't tease me, I have no time for foolery."

"The *Sahib* does not recollect his slave, but may I speak? and shall I be pardoned?"

"As far as I am concerned, if you slew my brother, but be quick; see, my horse is impatient."

"Enough, your slave is Azim Bohurya; the *Sahib* will recollect he honoured me with his notice at the trial."

"Ah, what brings you here? but I have no time now; follow me to Firozpur, and here," pitching him another rupee, "is an earnest of your safety." Saying this I touched my horse's flank and pushed on, but turning round perceived the poor wretch with both hands to his head placing it repeatedly on the ground. Before sunrise I was at Jeera, a large town, a little to the left of the road; it has a mud fort very much in decay; I here merely changed horses, and spoke for a few minutes to the *Thánadár*. The place

with some adjoining territory is a *jagir* of Kowr Sher Singh's, in consequence of which the Thânadâr and his subordinates were inclined to take some airs, but I put them down instantly, and ordered the former to attend me to Firozpûr. The country shortly beyond this assumed a much wilder and more uncultivated aspect; around me the lands were bare, but far on my right I could see heavy coarse grass, and on my left a forest of small jungle and underwood; at three miles from Jeera we passed Meharsingwâla, and then entered a forest of small trees, many of them little more than underwood; one kind (the *Jhund*) is of the *Babûl* (*Mimosa*) species, but of inferior quality; the rest, the *Bhun* and *Kureel* are hardly fit for firewood, and useful for nothing else. This forest lasted with little interruption till we passed the small fort and village of Kâl, and the village of Shersingwâla on our right, when we entered on a wide open plain, generally quite bare, but with occasional patches of grass; the plain is cut transversely by a deep, narrow, canal-like *nalah*, which, in its windings, we had more than once to cross; as we entered this plain, we could, at a distance of eight miles, perceive the towers of Firozpûr.

The day was yet early, and the air was cool; I therefore rode leisurely across the plain, and was surprized at the absence of all cultivation, though, here and there, was the appearance of old wells and relics of little towers attached to each ruin; they and their wells were equally dilapidated.

The Râni sent as a deputation to give me the *istakbâl*, her adopted son and the Master of her Horse, neither of them very taking looking fellows: and their followers were a very tag-rag set, more like bandits than followers of a Queen; I was shewn to a neat little *baraduri* in a newly laid out garden, north of the town, close to a tank, which the Râni was then excavating, to leave in memory of herself and husband, as they had no children.

Before I had well finished my breakfast, I observed a nearly naked, spare, sinewy man, coming at an easy swinging pace up to the *baraduri*. I at once recognized the Bohurya, and gave orders for his entertainment: in the afternoon, not feeling disposed for any employment I summoned my new retainer, and from his own lips gathered a tale that may take its place here, as a fresh illustration of the land of my sojournings.

PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF
THE BOHURYA'S TALE.

Where I was born, or who was my father, is more than I can tell the *Sāhib Bahādur*; but my earliest recollections are of the neighbourhood of Delhi, when the party with which I dwelt hovered around the tombs of the old city during the day, and at night entered into the *farangi* cantonment, or gleaned what they could from the townsfolk; at times we got rich booty, and again we would be for months without success; living on such vermin as you saw me, *Sāhib*, collecting last night; my father, or rather my owner, for he did not conceal from me that no blood of his ran in my veins, was the leader of the band: Bhutenda I understood to be their head-quarters, and all large towns and cantonments their haunts; our harvest was a double one, we were thief-catchers as well as thieves; our kinsmen were the *Chokidars* in many of the wealthiest houses of the territory, and our hardiest and expertest hands were trackers, employed by the Magistrates, *Kotwāls* and their subordinates. Ah, *Sāhib*! it makes me laugh even at this day, when I think of the funny pranks we played! and of how we managed the police. I will tell you one of them, as it will interest you more than to hear that we starved to-day, feasted to-morrow, that I was thrashed and fostered at the will of one who used me very much as he did his tattoo, and would have cut my throat when useless, as readily as he would that of his broken down quadruped; Sungtia was his (my foster father's) name, he was a spare, small man, apparently worn out, but possessed of immense powers of endurance; between dawn and star-light I have dragged myself forty *kos* at his heels. I hated him, how could I else? but his genius commanded me; he was indeed a noble robber, a profound deceiver, a most skilful tracker; the genius by which he managed to deceive his own pursuers, enabled him to detect the futile attempts at concealment of those against whom he was employed; and little as he cared for any one living, and difficult as it would have been to ascertain what he loved, what his object in life was, still he had the point of honor that forbade him (unless for a decided object,) to betray or to assist in convicting those of his own tribe; Gūjar, Jāt, Mewattī and Rangur, however, and all the other host of marauders, were fair *shikar* for Sungtia Bohurya, and all came just as kindly to his net. But to my anecdote: In a certain suburb of Delhi lived an old Pathān fami-

ly ; they were poor but respectable, chance threw Sungtia into their company and made him useful ; they were grateful, as much so as a proud Moslem could be to one he considered more impure than a Christian, worse than a Hindu ; Sungtia was, in his way, proud ; the pride of talent and of energy distended his meagre and stunted person, as did his Affghan blood the goodly form of Rustam Khan. In one of his visits the Bohurya caught a glance of the daughter of his host, was smitten, and at another time was detected attempting an interview ; he was beaten with shoes from the premises, and warned of a worse fate if he again trespassed ; “ when I again enter, your shoes shall be put to another purpose ; ” was his cool and taunting reply, as Sungtia hurried into the street.

My father (so I call him) was wary ; slowly and surely he worked, he had an able coadjutor in the Magistrate, who loved forms more than realities ; law more than justice ; indeed had not such a *gharib parivar* been in office, how could poor Bohuryas have existed ? Sungtia had long had his eye on a certain wealthy Banker in the Chāndni Chouk ; he wanted a few of his money bags, but now he cared less for the treasure than for revenge—in fact he was resolved to plunder the dwelling, and fix the outrage on Rustam Khān ; a night was settled for our gang to do the job ; it was a dark stormy one, no star was visible ; we had already prepared our measures by burying a bag of rupees in a corner of the Pathān's dwelling, through the instrumentality of his *Chokidar*, who was a Bohurya, though he passed as a *Mawātī* ; we had seventy men that night employed ; two small parties, each of a dozen of our boldest comrades, covered the approaches to the two nearest *thanah* stations ; a string of thirty men completely cut off our victim's dwelling from neighbourly assistance, or from any chance aid ; some few stout raw hands were kept as carriers ; and six expert and experienced leaders entered the dwelling, the door of which they found ready open, and the two *Barkandazes*, who should have watched, in a heavy sleep on the ground, caused by a drugged potion administered by an ally within. Our friends proceeded direct to the *zenana* roof, where the old Banker slept, seized him, and on peril of his life, forbade him to utter a word, or do more than shew the spot in which that day jewels to the amount of eleven thousand rupees had been deposited ; and cash to a

somewhat greater extent ; the old man refused, swore he was poor, and had nothing but his cooking utensils in the house to which *his friends* were welcome ; my father gave the signal to put a *chillie* (*b*) bag over the Banker's head ; one instant it was applied in spite of the victim's struggles ; and being removed, he was asked if he would now shew his hoards ; the big drops of agony falling from his brow, the old man told his tormentors to follow him, shewed them the treasure, which was seized, and in less time than I have taken to describe the occurrence, the box was emptied, and the despoilers had separated into different parties ; not meeting again until they reached an old tomb agreed upon.

My father, however, never left the town ; he and two or three others had, by a circuitous route, gained the hovel in which they resided before the lazy *thanadar* was roused, and, in compliance with the Banker's desire, was endeavouring to trace the course of the spoilers ; " Oh we shall make nothing of these various tracks, Chund Rām," said the head policeman to his subordinate ; " we must have *Sungtia Bohurya* ;" as desired, Chund Rām went for my father as he had often before done ; and found him in a heavy sleep, and in no good humour at being disturbed ; when, however, he was well awakened, and told the value of the prize, and therefore the probable amount of the salvage, or at least of the reward, his professional pride and avarice seemed excited, and calling to his fellows loudly, he told them to be up and stirring, for there was good *shikar* on foot. They accompanied the police, and affecting for a time to beat about the premises, and to go first one way and then another, they at last followed with but little hesitation the well defined tracks of four pair of feet ; and well they might, for the shoes had been abstracted, and placed on men as nearly as possible filling them, during the early part of the night ; and been thus used to make prints right up to the Pathān's house, into the threshold of which they were then thrown ; but I see, *Sahib*, that I am becoming tiresome, so it may be enough to say that we not only gained a large booty, and were never so much as suspected of the robbery ; but that we had the pleasure of seeing the proud old Moslem and his gay sons rattling their chains as they pounded *kunkur* on the high road. It was a favourite recreation of my respected father's to mount his tattoo, and go and look at the *kydees* as they were at work, and congratulate his old friend on the com-

fortable berth he had procured him ; we thus picked up many useful acquaintances ; and were able to do them numerous good offices, and could at any time effect the release of our friends, either by watching opportunities to help them to loosen their fetters, or by directly bribing their guard to let the prisoners escape, or even to desert with them. I was but a boy in those times, my lord, and, as I have said, was not always over daintily treated, but still there was an excitement in the work that I enjoyed : evil days however came on our gang ; success had made us rash ; we neglected the arts by which we had risen, and soon paid the forfeit.

Our boldness had excited attention ; our old coadjutor the Magistrate was promoted to be a Judge ; the new one turned out the Kotwāl and his crew, but that was of little consequence ; we were soon as intimate with the new police as with the old, and it was our own imprudence, and treachery in our camp that caused our downfall.

The citizens of Delhi finding that the police would not take care of them, set themselves more actively to take care of themselves, and began to be more careful as to the persons they employed as *Chokidars* ; in short my father's time was come, his web was spun, and the old man was killed in a night attack on a house whose inmates had got information of our intention.

Without an able leader we soon lost credit with the police, and even ceased to rely on each other, as it was clear there was a spy in the band ; we therefore separated ; I with two or three others came Northwards, and have since generally kept to the banks of the Sutluj ; until, shortly before the accident that unfortunately befel the *Sāhib*, I was induced to cross the river, and join the band that undertook to destroy my Lord—he knows the rest : why should the slave then dilate further than to shew how he is now in the presence ? The circumstances were thus ; when old Dandāwar Singh resumed his charge at Kāngrā, he was astonished to find several score of prisoners kept at the public expence ; saving my lord's presence he laughed at the *farangi* fashion, and ordered us all to be turned adrift, on payment of fines proportionate to our means, or rather to our ostensible means, desiring that all who could not or would not pay should be hamstrung—I was poor, and seemed poorer, but I paid down twenty-five *nanicshahies*, and am now at the *Sahib's* service as ready and bold a hand,

though I say it, as any on the border ; whether it be to hunt man or beast, to endure hunger or fatigue ; of the latter qualification the *Sahib* has this day had a specimen ; and in the long chase we gave Aliverdi Khān there was surely proof of endurance and even of ability ; the *Sahib* looks suspicious, but his slave can be honest, if it is worth his while to be so, and he feels no greater ambition than to obey the bold Colonel Bellasis."

Such was the wretch's statement, when separated from much of its irrelevant matter ; I did, as the fellow remarked, look doubtfully upon him ; but after some reflection I desired him to be *hazir*, feeling that I might want such blood hounds ; I therefore ordered that he should be clothed and fed, and told him that he should receive four rupees a month for food ; and as he worked should be rewarded.

NOTES.

(a) According to Sir W. Jones, lizards formed part of the food of the Arabs. "That a race of men *Tuzis* or *Koursas* as the Persians call them, who drank the milk of camels, and fed on lizards, should entertain a thought of subduing the kingdom of Feridun, was considered by the General of Yeozdegird's army, as the strongest instance of fortune's levity and instability."—*Asiat. Researches*, Vol. ii. p. 16.

Fishes, and other aquatic animals without scales, are considered unclean in the East, as they also are considered in the law of Moses.

(b) Chillie is the pod from which red pepper (*Kyan*) is made ; a bag of chillies hung over their victim's heads was the Mahratta favourite mode of extracting treasure—the fashion is not unknown to other ruffians.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

CONTENTS.

Bellasis turns over some more leaves in the volume of human life, ventures to prove a little, draws a picture that some will think unnatural.—Prosperity does not always contribute to happiness.

" And with his dying breath, resigned
The wreck of power he left behind
To Lachman Konwr the fond, the true,
Whose love's full spring-tide never knew
The ebbs and flows, the flaws and starts,
That win and alienate men's hearts ;
But, in a stream, deep, full and clear,
Reflected back one image dear."

M. S.

" Clasp me a little longer on the brink
Of fate, while I can feel thy dear caress ;
And, when this heart has ceased to beat, oh ! think,
And let it mitigate thy woe's excess,
That thou, to me hast been all tenderness,
And friend, to more than mortal friendship just ;
Oh, by that retrospect of happiness,
And by the hope of an immortal trust,
God shall assuage thy pangs, when I am laid in dust !
Half could I bear, methinks, to leave this earth,
And thee, more loved than aught beneath the sun,
If I had lived to smile but on the birth
Of one dear pledge. And shall there then be none
In after times—no gentle little one,
To climb thy knees, and look resembling me ?"

Campbell.

And now, having sketched the Bohurya, I will try to give some notion of the country and institutions of which he, and the many who resemble him, are the offspring. The little principality of Firozpur, in which I now found myself, is a fair specimen of the Sikh and border system, and I will enter into some details of a territory that is now familiar to the Company's servants, in order to give an idea of other Sikh States, little known to Europeans.

The nominal extent of the old Rāni's kingdom was a hundred square miles, but not one tenth of that land was in the undisputed possession of Lachman Konwar; indeed the town-lands alone could be called her's, and were cultivated by families living within the town, and crowded even into the ditch of the fort. The town, therefore, though of great antiquity, was at the time I visited it, little more than an assemblage of Zamindars' huts, mixed up with a few Banya's shops, and overhung by an old crumbling fortress, crammed to the throat with dogs, filth and old women.

I paid my respects to the Rāni, and found her very conversable, addressing me though she did from behind a thick hood thrown over her face. She told me she was a friend of the Māharājah's, but that her territory rejoiced in the British protection; her subjects, she said, were rebellious and idle, more apt to fight than to pay their dues, and being all Mahomedans, paid but little respect to a woman and a Sikhni; they had broken her husband's heart, and in her absence they had admitted her enemy into the fortress, and, but for the British, would have deprived her of her right. "They have ever been a rebellious race" continued the old lady, "and are not the subjects for a woman's rule; would that I had half the lands in my own country on the pleasant and peaceful banks of Jamna!" (a) The old lady finding I listened, was rather more diffuse in her narrations and complaints than I need here be; suffice it that I paid her the more respect that I neither heard at Firozpur, nor on my road of any of the abominations occurring under her rule that were so common elsewhere; for whether it was as a woman, or as a stranger and of a different religion, among a wild and high-spirited people, she ruled with moderation, and seemed to be more respected than those who received more lip-service. (b)

I ascended the roof of Lachman Konwar's palace, if a couple of little rooms, each about fifteen feet by nine, and as many high, may be so called; and from the top had a good view of the surrounding country, of its desolation, of its endless bare plain, varied only by few and single trees, and by fewer and wretched village sites, which at large intervals covered, rather than ornamented the country; the watch-towers already mentioned were the most striking points in the landscape, and gave fearful proof of the insecurity of all around; far in the distance South-west, the towers

of Mumdots were just perceptible, the only other object of note was the Kot of Dulchi, a large Dogar village, two miles north of the town of Firozpur, its inhabitants, nominally dependent, were always in rebellion against the Rāni's authority as they had ever been against every ruler. Many of these rude people, whose clan forms the majority of the Firozpur population, were hanging about the outer Court of the Rani's dwelling while I was there; their appearance struck me; their immense noses and large strongly marked features, their spare but athletic frames, and their bold independent bearing, all brought to my mind legends of the gallant deeds of their reputed ancestors the Chohans of Delhi.

There was an air of poverty and of squalidness all around Firozpur; scarcely a thriving shop in the town, and not one acre in thirty of the land under cultivation; the inhabitants seeming to prefer waiting on Providence, doing anything but work, and following any pursuit but that of industry, and yet there was a something in the place that interested me, and there was much in the old Rani's situation that excited my best sympathies. Toward evening I pursued my way to the *ghat* of Barake, five miles from the town; the first two ran nearly north, over high and tolerably cultivated lands, with good crops of wheat and barley on them, but without any fixed road or path between the fields; my way then inclined to the west for a mile, over a coarse grassy *Kadir* country, and then in the same direction for two miles, over a deep heavy sand. On the first part of my journey from the town, I met large flocks of cattle moving in to the walled inclosure for protection during the night; the cows and oxen seemed very much more numerous than the population, and the sheep and goats scarcely less so: as I now approached the ferry, I beheld with pleasure my own flag waving over my wife's boat, safely moored beside ten or twelve passage boats.

I found Mahtab well and comfortable; she had been five days making the voyage from Rupar, including one whole day, she halted at Tihara, to visit again the scenes of our upward voyage; the weather had been unsettled, and the river had very much fallen during our stay at Rupar, but there was still ample water for her boats, and, unused as she was to such conveyance, she found the trip as comfortable a one, as loving wife could do in her husband's absence.

We halted for a day at Barake Ghat for the double purpose of enabling me to make out my report for the Maharajah, and to observe the nature of the ferry and the extent of traffic that passed it.

The village of Barake is a large Dogar settlement, divided into three hamlets, called Chyneke, Syteke and Barake Khas; they are situated at intervals of about half a mile from one another, but the lands of all are in common; five thousand acres may be the area, half in the *Kadir*, half in the high ground; the latter portion has six or eight wells, around each of which a few acres are cultivated, and perhaps five hundred acres of the low land may be loosely so, but no care or labour is expended, the ground being merely scratched up, and the seed then thrown in to take its chance; the produce consequently is seldom above ten or twelve maunds, when it might be twenty or even thirty, and no such thing is known as raising a second crop in the year on the same ground.

The population of the three hamlets may be five hundred Dogars, Machis and Mallahs; the latter as their name denotes are boatmen, they also fish, one division of them with nets, another only with hooks. The Machis are more agricultural and domestic, working as servants, cooks and labourers; the lordly Dogars, who form the majority, sit, smoke, sleep and talk during the day under the half dozen meagre Barkaen trees that adorn their villages, and sally out at night to avenge their real or fancied wrongs, to carry off their neighbours' cattle, or to recover their own; they of course lose as much as they gain by such practices, for the trackers of the country are expert, and for one cow or buffalo that they steal, they are liable in retaliation to lose a flock; they are the village *maliks* in the Ferozpur territory, and for some miles along the river on either side, and eke out their means by their hereditary right to a third of the village produce, and by the *ghi* and milk from their large flocks; but as I have said, their loved pursuit is plunder, even though they must know it is little productive. They follow it, I presume, for its excitement, and are known to undergo more danger and fatigue in their unlawful enterprizes than in more legitimate pursuits, would gain them a fair competence; their common weapon is the sword and shield, and in their raids they are generally accompanied by another class whom I omitted before to mention, I mean the scavengers of the village, here called *chulaks*; and

elsewhere known as *halalkhor*, *khakrob*, &c., and all over India employed as guides, watchmen, and carriers. In this part of the country they are a peculiarly hardy and bold race, they profess no particular religion, pursuing at a humble distance the rites of the Musalman, Hindu or Sikh, according to the leading tenets of the village they inhabit, or rather of the suburb they are permitted to defile; they are to all intents slaves here; and indeed throughout India, they are the property of the village or of the liege Lord, just as so many cattle, are scarcely better cared for, and much worse thought of; their only safeguard, indeed, being the facility with which they can move to a neighbouring or hostile territory, in which case their secession, or abduction is looked on quite in the light of so many head of oxen being stolen; as I passed by more than one place in my late ride, I found the inhabitants warm on the loss, by such means, of a portion of their "hereditary bondsmen."

Strange as it may appear, under such nurture, scantily fed and clothed, and from infancy looked on and treated as vermin, these people (*Chulahi*) are hardy, bold, and enterprising; like wolves they are from childhood, put in a defensive position, if they are starved by their village masters, they must, in self-defence, steal with them or from them, plunder the crop they are set to watch, or live jollily on the enemy in their excursions with their masters, who in their raids seldom touch grain, or eatables, or indeed anything, but cattle and coin.

The *Chulahi* weapon is a light, short spear, or more frequently a heavy, iron-headed *lathie*; the latter, though formidable in appearance, is really less effective than a lighter and more handy stick, being too heavy and requiring great strength to wield it with effect.

But I have quite run away from the *gāh* to the *Barake* locations, which are about a mile and half from it; the ferry is just below the termination of a newly formed Island, five miles long, and averaging half a mile broad; this Island is covered with high rank grass, and is frequented by tigers, who feed upon hog-deer, and on the cattle driven there from both sides for pasturage; the ferry at this time, (early in November,) was three hundred yards wide, but in the rainy season the stream is not less than two miles broad, and runs with a force of not less than five miles an

hour ; now it is sluggish, the passage to and fro in the rains does not take less than six hours, now half an hour is sufficient.

Barake had been wrested from the Firozpur Estate, its ruler therefore lost the valuable transit duties, which are now divided, or contested by the Kassur and the Khye Chiefs ; the right of the latter I cannot understand, as no part of his territory here touches the river, the village of Bārake having been seized by the Khān of Mamdot, however such is the case at present, and a valuable perquisite it is, to be able to levy from five annas to as many rupees on every camel-load passing ; cloths, *pashminahs*, and groceries pay the higher rates, grain the lower ; every different article paying a distinct duty.

This *ghāt* is still a considerable thoroughfare, but it labours under several disadvantages, not the least being the heavy drag of deep sand for two miles on the Firozpur side ; many an inroad has been made at this passage where, by crossing at the Island, or at a point just below, a bold Cavalry will, for three months in the year, find no difficulty in crossing, as the cattle stealers indeed do throughout the year ; Pak Patan, however, about one hundred and twenty miles below by the river, was the great thoroughfare of the older invaders of India, as Hurriki, thirty miles above, has been of later times ; the latter is now the chief mercantile passage, employing from twenty to thirty flat-bottomed boats, being three times the number in use at Bārake.

But my reader may be as tired as was my wife at this tirade on robbers, and on their haunts and routes ; she begged me more than once to put down my pen and talk to her, but I put on one of my winning smiles and told her I was writing of her, of what a good little wife she is, and how she is already able to act as my Secretary, and is better to me than a *Mohāfiz daftar* ; she smiled a real sunny smile, and told me not to banter my little wife : but I was, and told her I was, quite in earnest ; and as evening approached, we ascended the choppered roof of our boat, on the top of which had been prepared, by the old *faqir's* care, a nice platform of planks with a surrounding railing. There we sat for hours, eating the fresh breezes of evening, watching the sun touching the horizon, and then counting star after star as it arose ; the names of many were not unknown to Mahtab, and I loved to teach her the little I knew, and explain how they are applied by Europeans to

solve so many interesting questions of our own limited sphere ; the dear creature would press closer to me and say, "and shall we, my own husband, inhabit one of those bright spots together ? shall we there know no cares, no fear ?"

"Perhaps so, darling," said I, as I drew her closer up to me, "but it matters little for the locality ; if through him in whom we believe, we are received into his own abode, we know that we shall have perfect peace, purity, and love ; will not that be happiness ?"

"Yes, my husband, and when we are harassed by parting, and the fear of it, I love to think of heaven, and of that blessed assurance in the book you taught me, they shall go no more out thence." She looked upwards, and then said, "I try not to let distrust and fear darken our present happiness, but I cannot always banish the foreboding that tells me I must soon leave you. Oh, how I have dwelt on the thought of having your child laid in my bosom, of first hearing its voice, of shewing it to you !"

"And so it will be, I trust dearest, why should it not ?"

"I know not why, I suppose it is only bodily weakness that depresses me."

"Try my own Mahtab, to trust in the most Merciful, that all will be well !"

"Yes, dearest, all will be well, I know, whatever the result. Without this assurance, could I keep my senses for a day, when I think of the peril and anguish that await me ? Does not our book call this hope "the anchor of the soul ?" And her lovely face beamed with faith and love. She then added more composedly, "A short time will now realize my fears, or disperse them ; and in the mean time, my love, my life, let us be together ; only let us be together, and my human fears will not then, I hope, interfere with my heavenly trust." There was a piteousness in the tones of Mahtab, but there was more of love and devotion in her sweetface, than even her words expressed ; I kissed away her tears, bade her be comforted, and told her that whatever should separate us, it would not be of my seeking, or without her consent. Thus did we talk, and while away the time, the bright smile again came to her brow, and she bade me tell of my own land, of my own people : "I am but a foolish girl, and cannot help that these weak thoughts should come

over me, now that I have so much to live for so much to love, it relieves my heart to tell you all ; and oh, perhaps it may be so, that quieter times may come, and that we may live to see your home, and that your sisters will receive the wild mountain girl."

"That they will, my Māhtāb, and be proud to do so ; would they not, they should be no sisters of mine ;" and then I would tell of that home I had left as a boy, that I had returned to as a man, just to see it before it became desolate, its members all scattered with new ties, new cares, the head of it in the dust ; the mother still the centre of her scattered family with her children's children in every quarter, but still a lonely, almost a desolate being ; yes, what is life, its gains and pleasures ? we bring up our children, pray that they may be spared to us—for what ? to leave us before we are well become acquainted, and to be consequently strangers to us for life, looking on father and mother, not as loved friends, but as persons to pay their way, and to accompany light remittances with heavy advice.

I did not trouble Mahtab with all these profound reflections, but in intervals of silence, my thoughts involuntarily took such turn ; and what is uppermost will out, so gentle reader you must be the victim.

The night was well worn before we left the roof of our boat ; and I was scarcely asleep before I was somewhat rudely disturbed by a special messenger from the Maharajah ; accustomed to such molestation I took the despatch, and placing it under my pillow, again turned myself to rest ; but I was not to be so permitted, and for a time was kept awake by the repeated and surly applications of the Bhaya for an answer ; I desired that he should be patient, go to sleep as I was doing, and that in the morning he should receive his orders ; the fellow was loud and saucy, and I could hear him tell my *peshkhidmat* that he was not used to deliver his credentials to servants, and that he would not put up with the *farangi* airs, even though I might be a favourite ; I affected only to know that the man wanted an answer, and called out good humouredly, "give him a good *khana*, some liquor, and a comfortable *charpāi*, and he'll be in a better humour in the morning ;" the soft word had the usual effect : "*Salam Sā'id*," in dulcet tones was the reply, and once more I turned round to sleep.

Betimes I was stirring, and what was my surprize on opening the despatch to read, "The *khairkhwaht* of the good Bellasis has not been unobserved, the royal tongue acknowledges it, and it is registered in the archives of the State: under his Highness's rule, worth never goes unrewarded; and it is his pleasure to honour those who have been obedient and faithful; and who has been more so than the wise and valiant *Sāhib* now addressed?" What comes next? thought I, surely some mischief, after all this palaver; and I continued to read; "Hasten to Lahāur to report; the royal camp will reach the capital on the 20th November, when his Highness will expect an account of your proceedings; and purposes then to invest you with a *khillat* of General, and the command of seven thousand men, at the head of whom you will proceed into the *Darajāt*, and arrange the whole border from *Mūltān* to *Peshāwar*; the frontier is at all times troublesome, and just now unusually so, which is the reason that you are deputed to tranquillize it; perfect confidence is placed in you, your powers will be plenary; the Governors and *Kardars* of *Peshāwar*, *Attok*, *Dera Ishmael Khān*, and *Ghāzi Khān*, as well as of *Mūltān* will be placed under your orders."

"Your head has been exalted; the proudest and the ablest of the *Sardars* have long sighed for the appointment, which the Maharajah has hesitated to confer on any but yourself; be not elated beyond prudence, nor forget the practices that won you favour. The prayers of the subject are blessings to the King, and they can only be obtained through the instrumentality of faithful Agents—know the secret of your promotion, and respect the orders of the Maharajah."

The *parwānnah* was in the *faqir's* hand-writing, and bore the Maharajah's sign manual; a cipher slip was enclosed, which, after compliments, was to the following effect: "The heart of the poor *faqir* is heavy at the separation from his friend; his thoughts are, however, with the noble Bellasis. My friend, I have talked much with the Maharajah regarding you; he says you are the pearl of the age, the one honest man in his kingdom; I replied, that you were all and more than his Highness believed, and I suggested that *Kāshmir* would be a proper place for you.

"I have thought of it," replied the Maharajah, "but the *Rajah* does not think him equal to so difficult a government;" this

was said in a significant and undertone ; and then abruptly and more directly addressing me, he said, " I have it, *fagir* ! He shall be *malik* of the Western border ; am I not daily pestered with tales of the Murris, the Kutuks and the Afridees ? Bellasis is a bold fellow, and in sooth his pluck shall be tried ; tell him that for every rebel leader's head that he brings in, he shall have a *khilat* ; ah, he is just the man for the work !" and his Highness seemed to enjoy having hit upon so good a project ; he then musingly continued, " but" ——— (and the name missed my ear, it may however be guessed,) " will be offended ; let him, his anger cannot harm me, and will keep Bellasis stirring. Yes, *fagirji*, produce your *kalamdân*—write"—and the *parwānnah*, as enclosed, was dictated.

" Now, my friend, refuse not the Maharajah's free gift ; it is better than a principality to you, it makes you Ruler over Princes. Bear in mind I pray you, our conversations at Rupar ; put away from you all thoughts of abandoning so good a service, so kind a Monarch ; trust your poor friend, and hearty well-wisher, who will not only watch your interests, but be as your own *Vagil* at court ; and as for the lady the honored Kewar, for a moment I did think she might be a hindrance, but his Highness knew better, and chiding me, remarked, " she is not a pale-face ; is she not one of ourselves though now his wife ? and what is to prevent Bellasis taking his *zanana* ?" The Maharajah as usual was right, but it has struck me that you would like to have early notice to enable you to retain your boats, and perhaps send the excellent lady by water to Mithenkot.

" Your pay is to be the same as Ventura's and Allard's. Hoping for a happy meeting before the expiration of many days ; consider me as ever your warm friend. To say more would be needless, and unnecessarily prolong this already lengthy though friendly epistle."

I took the letters to my wife, and explaining the meaning, asked what reply I should give ?

" Take the office my love, it is one of honour, and do not let me be a hindrance to your plans ; I was wrong last evening, don't mind me, dearest, act as if I had no wishes on the subject."

" Like my *Māhtāb*, but look not sad, my own hind ; this scheme, if it separate us for a week or two, will ensure a preven-

tion to further and future separation; can you act the trooper sweetest, will you ride by my side along the wild Affghān border?" and I tapped my wife's smooth sweet face.

"Can I not? and what would I not do that we may be together? and what should I fear while you are my guide and guard?"

"I am but half in earnest my own wife, and dream not of parting, but I was thinking that if I am to be keeper of the border, I should save myself much after trouble, if I could first, quietly and unknown to all, ride along the whole line; in one month I should thus hear and see more than would reach me in years of more open investigation."

"Oh yes, let us go," was her reply, "my ambling *ghunt* and my little Arab will carry me without fatigue from one end of the country to the other; let us go; I'm sure you wish it, and you will not find me in the way."

"Not willingly I am sure; but you little know the difficulties, nay, dangers of the route and plan I propose; the berth will be a stirring one."

"If there is to be danger to you, then indeed, I should be there; for who will care for you, who watch and tend you in the absence of your Māhtāb? and as to a stirring berth, would not any *you* could get, be so?"

"We will talk all this over in the evening, but now I must answer these letters, for I hear the Bhaya beginning to grumble;" and so I took out my portfolio, while my wife seated herself on a small rug close to me, to pursue her English studies, and wrote my despatch.

NOTES.

(a) Lachman Kowr might well prefer the banks of Jamnā to those of the Sutluj. Her father's Estate of Booria and Jagādrī on the Jamnā is one of the finest in the protected Sikh states. The bamboo fence, better than an embattled wall, around Jagādrī is alone well worthy of the travellers' visit.

As proof that the Sikhs were not all and always barbarians, I may say that Lachman Kowr's father, fifty years ago, found Jagādrī a mean village, and left it at his death a commercial city of considerable consequence.

His bamboo fence protected the inhabitants from sudden inroads, and his character gave confidence to settlers against oppression. He made some few

rué laws and enforced them; one was for the preservation of the bamboo fence; the penalty against cutting a single branch being the splicing of the offender's finger. The plantation accordingly soon became a thick jungle, so thick that it was impervious to all, but beasts of prey who shared its haunts with the wild peacock; a tiger has been known to take refuge within it; but in those days the country around was a grass jungle: it is now for miles in every direction one broad sheet of cultivation, and of splendid mangoe groves.

(b) Let me not by this be thought that I advocate the system that has been aptly called that of the strumpetocracy. The Sikh states suffer too much by female rule, for any one who has witnessed its consequences to do other than reprobate the system.

For one Lachman Kowr that may be found, we will meet a hundred Empress Catharines.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

CONTENTS.

Bellasis takes the public into his confidence, and condescends to reason with that mysterious personage.—Hints on pathognomy, or the language of signs.

“ Oh Love ! in such a wilderness as this,
Where transport and security intwine !
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,
And here thou art a God, indeed divine ! ”

Campbell.

Looking back on what I have written, it strikes me as just possible that, because my adventures are not precisely those which they think an “ *Adventurer in the Panjāb* ” ought to have met with, some people may actually doubt the reality of my acts and writings. But, gentle reader, surely, you must by this time see that I have a way of my own, be it right or wrong, of working out my purposes ; and that, although I have neither been as authoritative nor as servile as others in my situation have been and would be, it is just possible that an Adventurer in the Panjāb may be only a moderate monster, avoiding extremes, and acting up to what he deems right.

But I must answer the Royal mandate ; accordingly, putting on the robe of prudence and the etceteras of plain-dealing and straightforwardness, I wrote that I had been acting according to my instructions, and that I was prepared with a full report of proceedings, which should be presented at court without delay : and in reference to the Māharājah’s intentions regarding the Western border, I stated that “ I am the servant of the Māharajah ; he exalted me, and it was his pleasure to degrade me ; but as I have eaten of the *Sarkār’s* salt, so am I ready to devote myself to his will, on the terms that the details for carrying out his orders be left entirely to myself. To petition further would be disrespectful.”

To Azīz-ū-dīn I wrote, “ To the *hakim* of the age, the wise in *darbār*, the trusty in need, the kind and considerate father. Thy

pleasure-giving epistle warmed the heart of thy well-wisher, and caused a ray of gladness to rise on his clouded soul: my friend, as I represented to you, I have no particular wish to remain in the Panjâb; I am still young; I have health and character, with good connexions in my own land; I was therefore in earnest in stating that but one tie held me to this country: the Maharajah, however, has been kind, and has again exalted me above my expectations; and in you I feel that I have a real friend; my life is therefore again at the disposal of the *Sarkâr*, and wherever it is his Highness's pleasure to send me, there will I cheerfully go. My friend, arrange for me that I shall have good regiments, and efficient Commandants; if I have not, it is heedless my going; let as many Hindustanis as possible be sent; and above all, urge on the Maharajah the necessity of keeping my appointment secret, until such time as, when on the border, I may find it convenient to assume command. Let brigades, as if to strengthen the frontier, be sent under Sheikh Akbaksh, Mehman Singh, and Dildar Khan, and by the Maharajah's permission, I will communicate to them my orders. If his Highness has no objection to the scheme, I propose to proceed by water to Multân as if on leave of absence to Bombay for six months; from Multân, after having made my enquiries, and then disclosed myself or otherwise arranged with Sawan Mal as most expedient, I would wish to ride along the Derajât border to Peshawar, arriving there as soon as, if not before, any definite tidings could reach; and thus picking up many honest opinions, and much real information as to the frontier. My friend is aware how difficult it is for a man in authority to hear the truth; how every view comes to him through a distorted medium; and on the contrary how freely every thing is communicated to the poor traveller; how he has nothing to do, but be civil and liberal of his *hukah*, say little and keep his ears open.

"One other point I have to mention. The Maharajah ordered in the *parwanah* written by your friendly hand, that I should be assured of a *Mislat* for the head of every chief I bring in. His Highness intended, I presume, to be jocose with his servant; but, to prevent mistake, tell our common master that while no exertion shall be spared to put down his enemies, he must expect no such service as he alludes to from me; for in my country, while we are taught to meet the foe manfully, we are equally enjoined to res-

pect his corpse, and to bind up his wounds ; all mutilations therefore are in our eyes barbarous ; my friend will explain this point."

All that remained was, to read the letters to my wife, and send them off by the Bhya. She listened, holding my hand with far more love and devotion as my wedded wife, than she had ever done during the exciting and romantic days when she was my betrothed, and with the same sweet, artless countenance that she shewed in childhood, when it was happiness enough to gaze on me, and anticipate my every wish.

It was my desire, as I told the *fagir*, to reach Multan in the guise of a private traveller ; I therefore resolved to retain the two boats I had on the river, and merely to run across to Lahaur, receive my credentials, return to the river, and embarking there, drop down to Mithankot, whence I could easily ascend the Chenab to Multan. Mahtab begged to accompany me to the capital ; "that terrible time you left me at Rugar," she said, "gave me a feeling I never had before. Since being your wife, I had never been a whole day without you till then ; and when day after day passed in solitude, I felt the sad possibility that we might live asunder. Till then, I never thought of existence apart from my husband."

I would fain have "bid the heart be still, that beat too warmly for its peace," yet I would not have had her feel less acutely, so I promised that she should accompany me, and I managed to lay a *doli dak* to Lahaur, for us both.

My route lay through the old city of Kasur, where as usual, I claimed admittance, on the ground of the Royal *parwana* I bore ; but Sham Singh was too tenacious of his own position to thus recognize my authority, and simply sent me a message to say that there was no entrance for uninvited strangers within his walls. It was not my wish to delay, nor the Maharajah's that I should come in hostile contact with those I visited. I therefore sent a polite reply, that the question should be referred to the *darbar*, and proceeded on my way.

I arrived at the capital a few days after the Maharajah himself, who had, on leaving Rugar, made a rapid sweep along the Eastern hills, where he was least expected. Avoiding beaten roads, he had studiously sought out the castles and villages of those who least looked for such a visit. To some few, the royal movement proved a blessing, but to the majority, and especially to those

least able to bear the burthen, the camp and court, as do all camps and courts, brought a curse and a plague. During this short tour some few *jagirs* were resumed, and *nazaranahs*, to a considerable amount, were received, but it was the *bigaris* and the poorer husbandmen who suffered most; the former driven with heavy burthens, like beasts from stage to stage, unremunerated, and uncared for, and the latter, daily and hourly plundered of their grain and fodder, and too thankful if not also seized as *bigaris*. Nor were such scenes unknown in my own camp; and all I could do, and all I could say, did not altogether prevent the practice, even under my own eyes. Once, on my travels, I saw the brother of a chief of high standing, and owner of a territory of several lakhs of yearly revenue, holding the horse of a common Munshi of mine as he dismounted; and on another occasion, witnessed the same *Sardar* assisting the other in climbing up a ladder: the inference being that any man in authority can hardly prevent his followers going through the land as a pestilence. The chiefs and officials so well understand the system, or rather so little intelligible does any other appear to them, that, on their own lands, when the plague comes, they just look at it as a visitation of Providence; thank their stars they too have had their day, or may have, and just grin and bear the passing evil; heaping all personal civilities on the visitors, while possibly they are exerting themselves to keep back the supplies, or to throw the onus of supplying the *rasad* upon a neighbouring territory.

I was soon summoned to the presence, and was received most graciously; as desired by me, no notice was taken of my proposed deputation to the frontier, but his Highness carelessly observed, that my request for six months' leave of absence was complied with, and it was only necessary that I should report myself monthly to the *faqir*. I thanked his Highness for his kindness, and then presented a report of my late deputation. *Faqir* Aziz-ud-din was desired to read it, which he did in his usual clear and business like style; attentively listening to the end the Maharajah observed, "Ah! Bellasis, so Sham Singh would not let you in! he is ruffling his feathers on the grounds of our approaching alliance with his house, but we'll teach him to respect our *parwanah*." "The *Sardar* is a *khair khwah*, faithful and brave," was responded by many voices, and I, unwilling to unnecessarily embroil myself,

pleaded for pardon for the offender. "You are a strange person Bellasis, they tell me you are hot, and I too have seen your blood boil, but in this and other cases you seem to possess more of the lamb than the lion." I replied smiling, "I would reserve my strength and my anger for the enemies of the *raj*, but Sardar Sham Singh is a faithful servant, even though the royal favor may have spoilt him." At my so unexpected interference in behalf of the offender, many were the "*waahs!*" and loud the exclamations from the hangers-on, in my favor: the friends of Sham Singh especially trumpeted my merits, and declared that there must have been a mistake, that on my own account the *Sardar* would have felt honored by my presence, and as bearer of a royal mandate the gates must have been and surely were thrown open to me.

The Maharajah was by no means deceived by the outcry, however he permitted himself to be softened by the interest taken in the offender; he therefore exclaimed, "Such an example must not go unpunished, and but that I remember the father's services, his son should not have another opportunity to shut the gates of *Kassur* against his Sovereign; but taking all things into consideration, we will on this occasion simply fine Sham Singh fifty thousand rupees: Eh, Dena Nath, note the *jurimannah*, and see that it is realized." Murmurs and further remonstrances arose, but the Maharajah silenced the speakers with, "*bas*, the order is given, we'll hear no more on the subject, and Sham Singh may thank my clemency." The business of the day then proceeded, and there was the usual strange mixture of accounts and of politics, of fines and maimings with speeches on mercy and forbearance: in due course the *darbar* broke up and I returned to my dwelling.

In thus sketching off these my reminiscences, I feel that, taking them in the lump, they will not bear scrutiny; that they are not only patchy; but that they appear to give different views at different times of the Maharajah and of his people. But, trifling as are my notes, their inconsistency lies less in my shewing than in my Hero's acting; for who that ever saw him or witnessed his acts, but must have pronounced Ranjit Singh to be the wisest and most foolish of monarchs? the gentlest and purest, as well as the most ferocious and debased of kings? Writing then, simply what I saw and heard, I rather report facts and impressions than

lay down matured opinions ; which latter remain for the historian to form, when the subject has passed from the stage, and when, taking him as a whole, with his lights and shadows, his opportunities and advantages, and then considering the times in which he lived ; a fair estimate of his character may be formed, placing him in a niche, at least, parallel with the pretended Regenerator of Egypt ; the wholesale Butcher ; the merciless Slave Dealer ; who can talk of civilization, of rights, and of justice in a manner that the more unsophisticated Ruler of the Panjāb would never have thought of doing. If the latter, then, had less vigor, he had less hypocrisy ; if his views were more confined, it was the result of circumstances ; and, with far less opportunity of knowing the truth and judging rightly, his career was much less marked with blood than that of Muhammed Ali, and the whole system of his government was spotless, as compared with that of the massacerer of the Mamelukes. Enough, however, has been shewn in these pages to prove, that though not altogether a pandemonium, still the Panjāb is not the country in which an honest man should choose to serve—most true—"then how," it may be asked, "do you, Colonel Bellasis, professing morality and all uprightness, reconcile to yourself your having sought such service and your still continuing in it ?" The question is easier to ask than answer ; and in reply I might ask the soldier, the lawyer, the trader, in any country, how he can reconcile this or that act to his conscience ? and further I may say, that as long as I remained in the service, I at least found in it less of slavery than perhaps in any European army ; and that I was less likely to have to act against my conscience than if serving with more civilized powers. Despotism is good, if it can be pure and energetic ; each petty Chief in the Panjāb is a despot ; I was one ; and if my ability could have equalled my intention, I might, during even my short career, have effected much good ; but in Russia, Prussia, Austria, France or England, what could a soldier of fortune have hoped for ? At best, as a hoary Subaltern, to slay or be slain by Circassians, Poles, or Italians, fighting for their liberty, or to waste the morning, ay, and noon of life on the coast of Africa, or the West Indies ; as a subordinate engaged in the most revolting duties ; to live uncared for, and to die unpitied ! But, in such a service as that I had sought and gained, there was at least excitement and quick promotion ; and above all, opportunity of

following, the bent of one's heart whether for good or for evil. It is not then the office, in the Panjāb, more than elsewhere, that either ennobles or degrades. I am thus diffuse because I know that many, who will begin by despising me as an ADVENTURER at all, will take especial offence at an "ADVENTURER IN THE PANJAB," while the same persons would, on the strength of a bit of parchment from their own sovereign, open their fire on their own countrymen, or would unhesitatingly serve as contingents, to put up any tyrant, or crush any struggle for liberty.

I made the preparations for my expected trip, quietly and cautiously, assisted only by my friend the *faqir* and his brother, my old acquaintance, Nūr-û-din. The *Khalifa* though very inferior to his elder brother; is, still, a most useful servant to the State: his appointment combines, as nearly as possible, the European offices of Commissary General and head Store-keeper; he also assists his brother in communicating with Europeans, is supposed to understand their temperament, and not to be too touchy about their neglect of forms. I need hardly note that many Europeans, low-born, low-bred, and low-minded, think fit to lord it over all Asiatics, and to shew their own dignity by refusing the usual civilities to those in every way entitled to them, whose feelings are hurt, and position among their own countrymen is lowered, by such rough contact with overbearing foreigners. Clever, supple characters, therefore, the willows rather than the oaks, are selected at native courts to deal with Europeans, and none perhaps ever did their work more dexterously than these two brothers. Aziz-û-din I have already noticed as the eloquent mouth-piece of his master; he is also the sole channel of communication with the English Government, and to his good sense and adroitly administered advice, may be attributed the long subsistence of friendly relations between the two powers. Like his master, (or rather, like all mankind,) the *faqir* is inconsistent; but I look on him as by far the best man in the Panjāb, the one who, with greatest temptations, has run through a long career with least reproach. He is perhaps the only one of the Lahāur courtiers, who has not a blood-feud to maintain, or who has not enemies, seeking his destruction; consequently, in any outbreak, his life would be safer than that of any other man in the court.

Short as was my stay this time at Lahāur, I saw fresh instan-

ces of those characteristics which struck me on my first arrival, and one I will record as illustrative of national manners.

It was about noon that I was returning one day from *darbār*, and riding at a smart trot, with only two orderlies, along the suburbs of Lahaur; suddenly I was met by a crowd of people, weeping, tearing their hair, and making violent gestures. This I should not much have noticed, such being the usual expressions of grief, but four of the party bore huge lighted torches, which glared even in the strong sunlight.

My readers may be aware that this is the oriental mode of expressing the absence of the light of justice, and the darkness of the ruler's eyes. The plan frequently succeeds; a blazing torch can be held up, where a poor petitioner dare not approach the Governor, and the appeal perchance attracts attention and obtains redress. Before I knew where I was, the crowd I met had recognised me, and shouted, "it is the *farangi* favourite, *Bellasis*!—make him go with us!—the *deōri* will not be closed against him!" and, on the instant, two fellows seized my reins. I was so irritated that I struck Chandha severely in the loins, and the horse, to disengage himself from his forward load, reared straight on end, throwing my tormentors on their backs, and nearly transfixing me on the spear points of some of the party behind. A pause followed, and then the crowd selected two spokesmen, who apologized for the violence of the rest, and entreated me to accompany them to the presence, and be their advocate, in a case of great oppression. I recommended the plaintiffs not to try a tumultuary appeal, but to come the next day to me, and state their grievances, promising to do my best for them. After some little demur, my counsel was adopted, and the crowd dispersed, with blessings and acclamations.

I need not trouble my reader with the details of the case; luckily it was one easily adjusted, and I had the pleasure of sending back the deputies, well-contented.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

CONTENTS.

The Lamp is extinguished.

"It is a fearful thing,
To love what Death may touch—a fearful thing
That Love and Death may dwell in the same world!"

Heman.

"I know thou art gone, where thy forehead is starred,
With the beauty that dwelt in thy soul;
Where the light of thy loveliness cannot be marred,
Nor thy heart be slung back from its goal!
I know thou hast drank of the lethe that flows,
Through a land where they do not forget,
That sheds over memory, only repose,
And takes from it, only regret!"

Anonymous.

"If I could keep thee as thou art,
All cold, and all serene,
I still might press thy lifeless heart,
And where thy smiles had been!
Even while thy cold, bleak corpse I have,
Thou seemest still my own—
But there — I lay thee in the grave—
And am indeed alone!"

Wolfe.

My business did not detain me more than a week at Lahaur and we lost no time in returning to our boats at Bāreki, or rather at Gandasingwāla, the village on the Panjāb side of the *ghāt*, where our boats lay.

Let me be forgiven if I linger over those days, every event of which is burned into my memory; and which now, when I look back on them seem to have comprised an age. They have left me the withered being that I am; perhaps more fondly and fancifully tenacious of my sparrow than I ever was of my happiness.

Once on a time,
 I saw a stately forest tree
 That spread abroad in summer time.
 His branches free;
 And if the storm some boughs had snapped;
 His roots were but more firmly wrapped,
 His stem more strong to see.

There came an hour
 When one sweet plant around him threw
 Her tendrils soft, and closely grew,
 His own dear flower!
 Wove round each branch her fingers alight,
 And brought of beauty and delight
 A precious dower.

I loved to trace
 How that rough tree was fondly grasped,
 And how, while love his branches clasped,
 In close embrace,
 All lovingly he lent his power,
 To prop and feed the gentle flower
 That gave him grace;

Till not one twig, or leaf, or spray,
 Of all the forest king's array,
 But was with its own tendrils curled,
 And with its own sweet blossoms pearled.

A flame within the forest sprung;
 On burning wings it swept along,
 Leaving the traces of its wrath,
 Blackness and ashes in its path,

It breathed upon the tree
 Dried up his verdant leaves and shoots,
 But left unscathed his vigorous roots—

But where was she?
 The lovely flower that round him grew,
 And from his breast her life blood drew;
 Whose tendrils, till in death grown cold,
 Had ne'er relaxed their loving hold,
 Low on the ground was laid!

The naked stem,
 Blackened and bare, still braved the storm,
 Unchanged his stature and his form,
 But reft of every gem.

He asked no other flower to come,
 And twine around his leafless home—
 The circling mouths that o'er him flew,
 Bathing his withered boughs with dew
 Sunshine, and rain, and breeze might bring,
 But brought to him no second spring.

Before we resumed voyage down the river, I paid another visit

to Kasūr, where my reception was very different from that I had met a few days before. Shām Singh had received a royal *parwānāh*, and could no longer refuse me admission, having also had proof that the Maharajah would not be trifled with; the Chief felt that it behoved him, by a double portion of assiduity, to make up for his former churlishness. Still, he could not conceal how irksome my presence was, and I did not feel inclined to remain long where I was an unwelcome guest.

During this visit, I gleaned some particulars of a place that contains much to interest the traveller; the impression left by my first hasty survey of the town and country was confirmed on closer inspection; I now ascertained that, of a fertile and extensive territory, but a small proportion is cultivated, and that the whole is sub-let by Shām Singh to a farmer, for less than a third of the revenue it might easily yield. The population is much like that described in the last Chapter but one, as inhabiting Pirozpur: in both places the same causes have worked the same effects; constant aggression, continual raids made or suffered, insecurity of life and property have made Kasūr even more a desert than the neighbouring estates; and where in the Panjāb can real good cultivation be found? or where the old and hereditary cultivators and village Chiefs? No where—every thing is done loosely, and as by people fed from hand to mouth, while the rural population will all tell you that they are settlers, that they have come from the West and South West, allured by promises of rich lands and liberal terms; they came and found a country wasted and desolated by the Persians, the Mahrāthas, the Afghāns, and the Sikhs. One part or other of Northern Hindustān has been continually exposed to the sword; but all the invaders passed through the Panjāb; it has therefore suffered the most, and bears to this day in almost every quarter, testimony to the blighting effects of war, and its train of ills, pestilence and famine among them.

Though this is not the place to enter into either the statistics, or the romance of Kasūr and its territory, they have too many interesting recollections attached, for us thus summarily to pass by this city of the dead, this mighty mass of ruin.

The present town occupies the enceinte of one of the twelve Pathān forts of modern days, while the remains of the ancient city

lie in massive ruins for miles to the North and East. The Kasūr territory being opposite the Bārake of Ferozpūr *ghat*, and between the other two great thoroughfares of invasion, Hureki and Pak Patan, suffered perhaps more than any other portion of the frontier except Ferozpūr from predatory inroads; what man failed to do, nature completed. The Sutluj in its wanderings, though it has perhaps increased the Kasūr lands, has, by throwing up beds of sand, destroyed many rich locations, while the Byās, a river that improves instead of deteriorates the lands on its banks, has completely forsaken the Kasūr territory, and instead of, as of old, uniting with the Sutluj at Kasūr, now does so some thirty miles higher up at Hureki.

As the traveller approaches Kasūr from the Khādar of the Sutluj, his eye is attracted in the far distance by the high kankery bank of what must have been the old bed of the Byās, rising two hundred feet above the Khādar, sprinkled with date trees, and the highest cliff capped by a *fajir's tukiya* close to the ruins of an ancient tower; the last remnant of the castles of the old Rajpūt lords, when Kasūr was a Hindū principality; and when, as history, or rather as local legends, say, a King of Delhi came, wooed and won the daughter of the Prince, and by degrees converted his bride, her father, and subjects to the tenets of Mahomed. It was not always thus persuasively that Islam gained her converts. The legend is probably correct, for all along this border, and indeed from the Jannā to the Attak, are tribes after tribes of converted Hindus, still bearing their old Pagan designations, and retaining many of their prejudices and customs; the same village often containing Hindu and Mahomedan, Rajpūts, Jāts, &c., calling each other brethren, and on certain occasions associating, and even sometimes inter-marrying.

The Rajpūt dynasty fell under an inroad of Affghāns and their descendants, the Pathān Chiefs were as already narrated, driven out by the Sikhs. The many forts still in repair with the many others of the Pathān times now crumbling to the dust, tell of the troubles and insecurity of their day, and the desolation of the whole country for miles around tell the same tale as does Sirhind and old Labāur.

Had time permitted, I would gladly have prolonged my stay at a place so full of tradition, and presenting such peculiarities of custom and character; but we had a long trip before us, and the cold

weather, that golden season in Hindūstān, was slipping away. We, therefore, resolved to continue our course down the river, and started for Bareke, our little fleet gliding down the stream, at the rate of about three-and-a-half miles an hour. Thirteen miles from Bareke we came to Memdot, a Sikh dependency, the name of which has already been brought before the reader in Chānd Khān's list of disaffected States. The Khān is a reluctant vassal of Lahāur; but considering me as a *Sāhib* in the Mahara-jah's favour, Jamāl-ū-din Khān thought it worth while to be on the river bank with his brother and son, and all he could muster of his retainers, some fifty foot and half as many horse, to do me honour, and invite me to his castle. I declined the invitation on the plea of haste, but received him with respect; and, under a *semi-danah* hastily pitched, talked for an hour with the Chief. He is a fine-looking man, of good and manly features; a sportsman and liking all Franks, or, at least, professing to do so, he asked me for a chit, which I gave, not exactly to the effect he desired, but such as in reason I could give; he produced very many for my inspection, some of them pretty considerably absurd, and watched my countenance while I read them, which fortunately I observed, or I might have hurt his feelings by the amusement that I could with difficulty conceal.

The town of Memdot is a miserable collection of huts; the fort is an old, imposing-looking place, but of no strength, and fast crumbling to pieces; they are on the edge of the Kādir, and run a fair chance by a freak of the river, to be soon bodily carried away.

What has been said of misrule at Kasūr and elsewhere, may, to the full extent, apply to Memdot: indeed more amply; for, instead of attempting to irrigate his extensive and rich lands bordering on the river, Jamāl-ū-din Khān has tried to increase his revenues by resuming the rights of the village head men; he has consequently very much lessened his income, decreased his population, and rendered those who remain thoroughly discontented.

Jamāl-ū-din Khān's territory yields to him, one way and another, fines, one-half of all crops, transit duties, and *adālat*, the yearly sum of fifty thousand rupees; and this from a tract of country not less than sixty miles long, bordered all the way by the Sutluj, and capable, in all its breadth, of being irrigated from that river.

About eight miles below Bāraki, we entered the Bahawal-

pâr territory on our left ; the Maharajah's dominion still continuing on our right ; the former, though still in many places covered with deep forests of tamarisk, shewed symptoms of more cultivation and of better government than the neighbouring country on either bank.

All went smoothly until we arrived near Pâk Patan, (*a*) a considerable town about six miles from the river ; already mentioned as the high road of the early invaders of Hindustân, but more famed for its annual fair. Wishing to see a place I so often heard of, I determined to halt the next day, and ride over to Pâk Patan, and gave orders accordingly. Mâhtâb, in her weak and nervous state, dreaded even a few hours' separation ; but she tried to laugh off her own misgivings. The weather was heavenly ; nothing could be more delightful ; the days cool, the mornings and evenings bracing. That evening as we sat on the roof of our boat, and saw no symptom of life around, except the other four boats of our fleet, containing our servants, baggage, and guard, we agreed that in such calm tranquillity, thus left to ourselves, we could have nothing to wish, no desire to gratify.

As usual it was late before we retired ; fearing no ill, I had left the arrangement of the night guard to Aliverdi Khan, who simply planted a sentry opposite to each boat, as a matter of form, not as considering any necessary ; I dreamt not of misfortune but my precious wife before descending from the roof exclaimed, " and is it the last time we are to sit here together, and must I go on without you, to-morrow, my husband ? " The dear girl was so overwhelmed by her feelings that she could give no reason for her fears, except the depression of spirits induced by bodily weakness, and, as I pointed out to her, the natural result of the terrors and excitement she had undergone, I tried to calm and comfort her ; and had scarcely succeeded in so doing, and seen her sink into a sweet sleep, when I was roused with cries of " fire ! " and the voices of my servants, exclaiming that the baggage boat was in flames. I started from my couch, and remembering that the few goods I had in the world were contained in that boat, I pulled on a dressing gown, and telling my frightened wife to remain quiet, I rushed out to see what could be done ; the boat was about a hundred yards from the one we occupied, and I had scarce reached it when I heard from the spot I had just left a rush of men, a few drop-

ping shots, and one piercing shriek; the voice was hers, I rushed back, but was received in the arms of several stout ruffians, who bound my hands behind my back, and threw me on the ground; the agony of body I then suffered was great, my arms were all but dislocated, but what was it to the racking of my mind? I called in my despair to all and every one of my people, but so well had the attack been arranged, and so completely were we surprised that all able and willing to strike in my behalf were either cut down or served as myself. No further violence, however, was offered, and as I lay in this state of fearful helplessness, I perceived that the band of ruffians quietly dispersed, seeming either to have effected their object, or been baffled in it. An oppressive silence followed the late shrieks and clash of arms; sometimes a moan from one of those bound like myself, or a deep breath from one of the wounded beside us, was the only sound. I listened in vain for the voice I wanted to hear, and when I called out my wife's name, my blood was curdled by the vacant silence into which my voice died away. At length morning dawned; I had ceased to struggle, from sheer exhaustion, and probably the cold air of the morning reduced the swelling in my limbs; I found that I could work my right hand out of its fastenings, and soon released myself entirely. In the dim light I sprang into the accommodation boat, and for the first moment could distinguish no object: groping along I stumbled over a dead body, which I soon recognised as that of one of the female attendants; and then a feeble voice besought for the love of Alla a little water to drink. I brought some to the poor sufferer, another of my wife's women, and when she had drunk it, bid her tell where was her mistress: she pointed to the cabin window. "Now I understand it all!" I ejaculated, "she threw herself into the river?" The woman motioned that I was right; I left the poor creature to her fate, and rushing out, loudly called to my people, some few who, like myself, had broken their bonds, approached: no one knew any thing of their mistress, I dragged the river in all directions for a quarter of a mile, but that day of despair closed on me without a clue to my lost one's fate. I found that seven of my people had been killed, ten wounded, and two carried away by a band of horse and footmen, said to have been not less than two hundred in number: all agreed that they were no common robbers that we had been

watched and tracked ; that the firing of the baggage boat was a mere *ruse* to draw me away from Mahtab, who was the object of the attack ; it was moreover said that none of the assailants struck but in self-defence, and that they seemed to have been anxious to execute their purpose without doing bodily injury to me or my followers.

They had carried off their own wounded and killed, so that we were unable to gain any immediate clue as to who, or what they were ; from the tracks of their feet they appeared to have separated into twos and threes immediately they got into the long grass jungle out of sight of the boats : all my people agreed that their mistress had not been carried off, so the cruel alternative remained that in attempting to escape, most likely in the hope of reaching me, she had fallen into the river and was drowned.

All that day, I have said, we searched, and while thus occupied, the fever of my brain was still, but when night again came, then indeed I felt the full desolation of my condition, all the bitterness of my lot ; my people watched me with affectionate solicitude, and I was averse to act the woman before them ; that night again no sleep came to my eyelids, and before dawn we were all again out, and with the aid of the Chief of Pak Patan, (who, alarmed at such an occurrence in his district, offered zealous assistance,) we searched high and low for several miles below our anchoring ground, when at length towards evening at no great distance from the boats we hooked up the remains of what had been Mahtab Konwar.

The sight of her, still beautiful in death, still uncorrupted, quite overcame my frame already worn to exhaustion ; I sunk faintly beside her, and it was long before I could be brought to understand where I was and what had occurred : my senses, however, came too soon, I took my loved one in my arms and bore her for the last time to her couch ; there I myself laid her out, attired her as if in mockery in her wedding garments, and watched her during the night ; while my servants by breaking up some large boxes, nailed together a rude coffin. The sound of the hammering during the night came on my soul as the knell of her departing spirit ; it was anguish to look on her, and yet I could not withdraw my eyes ; before morning a change had come over her countenance, the same calm, sweet smile was there, but the colour was changed, corruption was doing its work, the canker worm was

already at play. At sunrise the coffin and the grave were reported ready, the former was brought into the cabin ; once again I kissed my wife, I threw myself beside her corpse, and prayed that I could have died for her : my attendants had retired, but fearing something wrong from my long delay, they again entered and gently roused me to exertion : as calmly as I could, I took her in my arms, and placing her in her last cold narrow abode, I wrapped the snow white cloths around her, and for ever in this world bade adieu to her who had been the light of my eyes, the darling of my soul.

While the lid was being fastened down, there I sat, watching the movements of those who struck the nails, as if every blow was aimed at her, and surely as if every nail entered my own soul.

They carried her out, and seldom has young wife been carried and followed to her grave by more sympathizing mourners than was Mahtab Konwar, attended by no Christian, but her husband.

But why should I thus dilate ? why harrow my own soul, and again open out the wounds that time has softened though not healed ? As I read our beautiful funeral service over all that was dearest to me on earth, I felt that though she could not come to me, I should go to her, and that possibly she was then looking on me, and watching, with affectionate sympathy, the genuine outpourings of my broken heart.

I stopped at the *ghat* for a week ; and enclosed the tomb, planting wild flowers over it, and a girdle of evergreens around ; she was nature's own child, as pure, as uncorrupted as nature's self, and there she sleeps her last sleep, calmly and unmolested, in no burial ground of man, but in the broad plain of Pák Patan ; the heavens for her canopy, all nature for the bounds of her domain.

The last time I visited the spot of my angel's earthly slumber, I was sitting alone on the ground, in the dusk of the evening : I felt something touch my face, and, in the more than woman's weakness to which I was reduced, I started, and even trembled. The next moment I saw a beautiful butterfly, which has just emerged from its chrysalis ; and this trifling incident, bringing thus palpably before me the most vivid type of our own resurrection, did more to release my heart from the grave in which it was buried, and to carry my thoughts towards a glorious hereafter, than perhaps any thing else could have done.

Glorious creature of the spring !
 Floating life ! embodied joy !
 From thy rainbow-tinctured wing (b)
 Breathing bliss without alloy !
 Chill is their heart, their bosom cold,
 And dim their eye to see,
 Who in the heavenly form behold,
 A type of fluttering vanity !
 Different far the angel voice
 With which to me thou speakest,
 When, mounting upward to rejoice
 Thy cold, dark tomb thou breakest !
 "Sown in corruption" but a worm,
 On earth's dark breast to perish ;
 "In glory raised" a beauteous form,
 For Love and Light to cherish !

I could have lingered for ever beside the place where my hopes lay buried, but I remembered I had still duties to perform, and that an unmanly yielding to sorrow was not the way to shew thankfulness for the treasure that had been lent me, and for the hope given by Christianity. I roused therefore, and tried to employ myself, but soon found that if I could ever regain my elasticity of mind, it would not be while occupied in pursuits, so closely associated with my last one. Indeed, as I had told the *faqir*, but one tie bound me to Asia, and that one being severed, I resolved to seek a different land. I therefore at once wrote suitably to Aziz-u-din, and tendered my resignation ; begging for permission to continue my voyage to Bombay, there to embark for Europe.

In due course I reached Bahawalpūr, and there received answers to my letters ; the *faqir* was kind in the extreme, nothing could have been more so, had I been his son, he could not have shewn more real commiseration. The answer, however, to my request for *rukhsat* was in different sort ; it certainly expressed a proper feeling for my misfortune, but informed me that my marriage was an arrangement of my own, and one which in no way concerned the *Sarkār* ; that I, and not my wife was the servant of the state, and I was told plainly that my request should not be granted.

Had I not felt that Aziz-ū-din was in a measure my security, and would probably suffer by my secession, I should without ceremony have decamped, for I felt that while I had acted in every way honorably and openly, I had neither been treated fairly nor courteously, I therefore declined the *malam karse* offerings sent by

the Maharajah, and replied distinctly, though respectfully, that as I had engaged to perform a certain duty, I would do it; although I had neither received my *parwannah* of installation, nor had my instructions; but that after I had inspected the border, and done what lay in my power for its security, I should then tender my resignation; and I hinted that I meant, if refused leave, to take it. I wrote in still plainer terms to the *faujdar*, telling him that my mind was irrevocably made up, and that nothing should detain me longer than six months in the country unless it was to be avenged on Mahtab's murderers, of which I saw little chance; though at the same time I caused to be proclaimed a reward of ten thousand rupees for the simple disclosure, with proof, of the instigator of the deed.

My pen has lost its fluency, and I feel that my task is already ended, though I should wish for consistency's sake to finish my career with credit, to fulfil my engagement and to tell my readers how I did so.

CONCLUSION.

In reading the foregoing pages, let it be remembered, that they are not written to-day; in fact that it was during the year 1840, they first appeared in the *Delhi Gazette*.

Some of the prophecies given by Bellasis have been realized, some falsified, by the events that have since occurred; but on the whole, the ADVENTURER has reason to be satisfied with the extent to which his prognostics have been fulfilled.

The Panjab has been troubled,—mightily so,—and has only been saved from wreck by the good faith of the powerful neighbour;—two, nay three, dynasties have passed away. Runjeet Singh, his son, and his grandson have all been gathered to their fathers, and the man who in the ADVENTURER'S opinion had hardly a chance of succeeding to the throne, now reigns with the brother Rajahs as his vassals and ministers; with the brother *fajirs*, as equally his humble servants.

Within three short years have all these events occurred ; to develop their causes, and to trace out the effects in all their tragic course, may furnish an interesting chapter in Panjab history, a chapter more startling and more romantic in its realities, than fancy could paint, or imagination conceive. The ADVENTURER however deals rather with the past than with the present ; and indeed would as seldom as possible intrude into the path of the historian ; satisfied with the humbler, though not less useful, task of noting the springs of men's actions, and, by glances at the back scenes of the Panjab society, account in a measure for the peculiarities and apparent inconsistencies of Sikh character.

History gives a *mass* of events, historical romance only offers pictures of men and manners, and seeks rather to sketch the interior scenes of life, the details, as regards the Panjab, that seldom come before Europeans, than to chronicle events that are already recorded in the Indian Ukhbars, and other papers of the day.

Since this first part of the work was written, the ADVENTURER has had opportunity of personally testing the correctness of many descriptions and opinions here given : many apologies are due for the incompleteness and patchiness of the work as it now stands, and it did occur to him to re-write the whole, with the advantage of his further experience and observations. But not having detected any material error in what was already put forth, and not having more time at command than he can otherwise dispose of, he ventures to give it to the public as it stands.

Suffice it to add, that in obedience to the commands of Ranjit Singh, the ADVENTURER continued his progress from Pak Patan to Multan, and thence visited the Derajat and the whole Western border up to Peshawar ; that the conduct of the Lahaur Ruler then drove him through one of the passes in the Sulimani range into Afghanistan, just at the time that Shah Sujah was making that effort for his throne, which ended in his defeat at the battle of Kandahar in which Bellasis took a part. That his fortune afterwards led him to Kabul and Jalalabad, and that in the neutral ground of the Khaibar and Peshawar, he experienced some adventures, which, if the reading public give encouragement, may hereafter be laid before them.

NOTES.

(a) "*Pāk Putan*" "*the entrance of purity*," or "*the holy gate!*" ("*pak*," *pure*; "*Putan*," *an entrance*.) At this place there is an annual fair, on which occasion a small, low gateway is opened, only high enough to admit of a person creeping in: on these occasions numbers do resort to the spot, as every one who crawls through, thereby secures an entrance into paradise. Such was the legend I heard near the spot, but I do not know its origin.

(b) "*From thy heavenly tinctured wing,
Breathing bliss without alloy.*"

The wing is the organ of respiration with butterflies. There is a beautiful Irish superstition, that the sight of a white butterfly, at the time of a person's death, betokens the happiness of a departed spirit.



PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

[Additional note to Chapter 2d, continuation of the first note, page 28, on the French Officers; speaking of Avitable, the note goes on]

"Avitable is of a different stamp"—he has ingratiated himself with the British officers who have passed through Peshawar, by his boundless and princely hospitality, and it is perhaps excusable to shut their eyes to the faults of a man whose salt they had eaten. Less cordial participation in half-barbarous feasts, (for *champagne* does not of itself constitute civilization,) and a juster picture of the man, might seem to some more becoming English officers.

The most lenient view that can be taken of General Avitable is, to consider him as set in authority over savage animals—not as a ruler over reasonable beings—grinding down a race, who bear the yoke with about as good a grace as "a wild bull in a net," and who, catching their ruler for one moment asleep, would soon cease to be governed. But it is to his disgrace that he "acts as a savage among savage men," instead of shewing them that a Christian can wield the iron sceptre without staining it by needless cruelty or personal vice; without following some of the worst fashions of his worst neighbours. General Avitable has added summary hangings to the native catalogue of punishments, and not a bad one either, when properly used; but the ostentation of adding two or three to the string suspended from his gibbet, on special days and festivals, added to a very evident habitual carelessness of life, lead one to fear that small pains are taken to distinguish between innocence and guilt, and that many a man, ignorant of the alleged crime, pays with his life the price of blood, for it is the General's system, when, as often happens, a Sikh, or any other of his own men, disappears at or near any village in the Peshawar territory, to fine that village, or to make it give up the murderer or murderers; the latter is the *cheapest* plan, a victim or victims are given up, and justice is satisfied.

Still General Avitable has many of the attributes of a good ruler; he is bold, active, and intelligent, seeing every thing with his own eyes, up early and late, he has, at the expense of his own character for humanity, by the terror of his name saved much life. Believed to fear neither man nor devil, he keeps down by grim fear, what nothing else would keep down, the unruly spirits around him, who, if let slip, would riot in carnage; his severity may therefore be extenuated, as the least of two evils; but no such palliation can be offered for gross sensuality and indecency, tending to degrade the very name of Christian in the sight of, perhaps, the very worst specimen of God's creatures among whom he dwells. Avitable's whole system of morals is oriental, avowedly eschewing force, when artifice can gain the point, and looking on subjects as made to be squeezed; in person he is tall and stout, with bushy beard, whiskers and moustache, marked with the small-pox, and with a coarse and unprepossessing countenance, exhibiting at times the worst passions of man, but again lighted up into even a pleasing expression: of no education, but with strong natural sense and ability, he has acquired a good knowledge of Persian and of the Panjabi dialect. Strangely influencing those around him, and influenced by them, his history is a curious study, and when his own generation has passed away, will hardly be believed.

(Additional note to Chapter 3rd, page 36, after the words, "The Guru Teg Bahadur was put to death.")

This name signifies "*Lord of the Sword*;" an appellation which gave offence to Aurangzeb, who desired the Guru to adopt some other name. The leader refused, saying, "You will find that my son will verify the title, and conquer by the sword." And so he did, transforming the meek and oppressed Sikhs into the bold and oppressive *Singhs*.

[Additional note to Chapter 3rd to come in after the words "Most are childless, and a large family is never found," page 37.]

A curious illustration of this remark is, that Rajah Sachet Singh has been three times married, and has no children; while his brothers, who have each been four times married, have each but two sons: those of Dhyen Singh being the well known Hera Singh, and Jowahir Singh, those of Gulab Singh were Udam Singh, killed by the fall of a gateway when Nao Nihal also perished, and Jowahir Singh, now alive. Dhyen Singh, indeed, is said to have had more than one daughter, who, according to the laws of his tribe, perished immediately after birth.

THE END.

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